HE ADVENT

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A Quarterly Devoted to the Exposition of Sri Aurobindo's Vision of the Future

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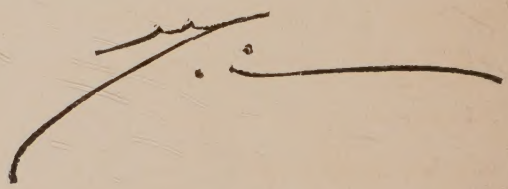
The grace and the help are always there for all who aspire for them and their power is limitless when received with faith and confidence.



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Yet Light is there; it stands at Nature's doors
And holds a torch to lead the traveller in;
It waits to be kindled in our secret cells;
It is a star showing an ignorant sea,
A lamp upon our poop piercing the night.
As knowledge grows the Light is seen within;
It is the shining warrior in man's brain,
An eagle of dreams in the diving heart,
An armour in the fight, a bow of God.

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The Divine gives itself to those who give themselves without reserve and in all their parts to the Divine. For them the calm, the light, the power, the bliss, the freedom, the wideness, the heights of knowledge, the seas of Ananda. - - - - - *Sri Aurobindo.*

EDITORIALS

EURHYTHMY

THE human body is by its nature a system of rhythmic movements and it is a marvellous system in that respect. We all know the strictly periodic motions of the heart and of the lungs. It is when the blood circulates at a definite speed and with a definite beat, when the breath keeps an unbroken measure and tempo that we have the ideal condition of ease and health for the body. Ailing comes in when the rhythm snaps. The timing in the pressure of the muscles of the digestive system, the regularity in the action of the secretive glands, even the twinkle of the eyelids point to the same truth characteristic of life function. And the normal walk of a healthy man has a patterned balance in the alternate movements of the legs and the hands.

The rhythmic movements are set off against and are based upon a structure which is also a marvel of balance and symmetry. The dual system seems to be the very ground-plan of the body structure. Legs, hands, eyes, ears go by twos. Lungs, kidneys, intestines follow suit. The interior of the trunk itself is almost equally divided into two parts by means of the diaphragm. There is one nose but two nostrils, one cranium but holding two lobes: one heart has two distinct divisions. Organs that are apparently single possess a structure characterised by two balancing sides: the heart

is of that category, even the tongue presents a double-sidedness in its longitudinal section.

The whole nervous system that controls the movements of the body is a system of double or complementary control. The afferent and the efferent, the sensory and the motor nerves form a significant base for the actions and reactions in the body. The fundamental note of the body rhythm is perhaps given by the systoles and diastoles, the pendulum movement of the heart, the centre of life and its energy.

The secret also of restoring health to the body or maintaining it lies in setting this rhythmic motion, practising it and living it consciously. Feverishness, any upsetting of the functions means irregularity or a break in the rhythm and balance. The whole Pranayama, the key to Rajayogic discipline, is to gain control over the body and its functions by means of rhythmetisation of the breath. The Ira and the Pingala, the taking in and the giving out of the breath in a measured rhythmic movement, fuse themselves into an upgoing and enhanced movement of life energy (Sushumna).

A rhythmic exercise not only stabilises energy, maintains it long on the same level, but enhances it, raises it to a higher potential, by simply reducing the element of waste. Look at the hammer blows of the blacksmith, the see-saw of a sawyer, the whack and hiss of a washerman, the sing-song of a palanquin-bearer, everywhere continuous movements tend to become automatically rhythmic; for that helps the continuance or prolongation of the movement without fatigue. The beast of burden plods slowly and steadily, the horse trots or gallops fast, but all move rhythmically to avoid being tired easily or too soon, to be able to work more and put in more sustained energy. Rhythm, as I have already said, helps, because it reduces waste of energy. Haphazard, random, erratic movements disperse and dissipate energy. Rhythm harnesses and canalises energy. It is exactly for this reason that the word that has rhythm in it has more energy than a word that is rhythmless: poetry is more powerful than prose because it has concentrated rhythm.

In the movements of the body, therefore, eurhythmy is not only a factor that contributes to beauty, but is supremely useful. It economises energy, utilises it to the utmost advantage. In physical exercises or gymnastics, therefore, for the growth and development of the muscles, for example, not mere repetition but rhythmic repetition forms an essential part of the method. Eurhythmy demands also not merely the growth and development of muscles or limbs of the body taken singly, but a co-ordination and harmony of them all. That was the essentially Greek ideal of the human body. A Greek body is praised especially, not simply because of the perfect build

and shape, strength and contour of each and every limb, but because of the marvellous harmony of them all, making a beautiful integral whole—one tone breaking out as it were into a symphony of undertones and overtones. To this end the gait of the body is the first and primary lesson that has to be learnt. Virgil speaks of the "godliness of the steps": the carriage of the limbs as a whole must express a perfect rhythm. Simple walking, marching, running, racing were items of sports greatly loved and recommended by the Greeks, apart from physical feats showing special kinds of strength, skill and capacity. For that is the basis, the fundamental note upon which all the rest can be built up and displayed to full advantage.

And perfect rhythm in the body means a perfect quiet in the body, cells and nerves controlled and self-possessed. But that is another subject and leads to another domain.

THE MARRIAGE OF HEAVEN AND HELL

The ideal was Blake's. It will not sound so revolting if we understand what the poet meant by Hell. Hell, he explains, is simply the body, the Energy of Life—hell, because body and life on earth were so considered by the orthodox Christianity. The Christian ideal demands an absolute denial and rejection of life. Fulfilment is elsewhere, in heaven alone. That is, as we know, the ideal of the ascetic. The life of the spirit (in heaven) is a thing away from and stands against the life of the flesh (on earth). In the face of this discipline, countering it, Blake posited a union, a marriage of the two, considered incompatibles and incommensurables. *Enfant terrible* that he was, he took an infinite delight in a spirit of contradiction and went on expatiating on the glory of the *mésalliance*. He declared a new apocalypse and said that Lucifer, the one called Satan, was the real God, the so-called Messiah the fake one: the apparent Milton spoke in praise of God and in dispraise of Satan, but the real, the esoteric Milton glorified Satan, who is the true God and minimised or caricatured the counterfeit or shadow God. Here is Blakian Bible in a nutshell:

> "But first the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul is to be expunged. . . . If the doors of perception were cleansed everything would appear to man as it is, infinite."
>
> "The eyes of fire, the nostrils of air, the mouth of water, the beard of earth."

Such is to be the ideal, the perfect, the spiritual man. Have we here the progenitor of the Nietzschean Superman? Both smell almost the same sulphurous atmosphere. But that also seems to lie in the direction to which

the whole world is galloping in its evolutionary course. Humanity in its agelong travail has passed through the agony, one might say, of two extreme and opposite experiences, which are epitomised in the classic phrasing of Sri Aurobindo as: (1) the Denial of the Materialist and (2) the Refusal of the Ascetic. Neither, however, the Spirit alone nor the body alone is man's reality; neither only the earth here nor only the heaven there embodies man's destiny. Both have to be claimed, both have to be lived —*ubhayameva samrat*, as the old sage Yajnavalkya declared.

The earliest dream of humanity is also the last fulfilment. The Vedic Rishis sang of the marriage of heaven and earth—Heaven is my father and this Earth my Mother. And Blake and Nietzsche are fiery apostles of that dream and ideal in an age crippled with doubt, falsehood, smallness, crookedness, impotence, colossal ignorance.

We welcome voices that speak of this ancient tradition, this occult Knowledge of a high Future. Recently we have come across one aspirant in the line, and being a contemporary, his views and reviews in the matter will be all the more interesting to us.* He is Gustave Thibon, a Frenchman—not a priest or even a religious man in the orthodox sense in any way, but a country farmer, a wholly self-educated *laïque*. Of late he has attracted a good deal of attention from intellectuals as well as religious people, especially the Catholics, because of his remarkable conceptions which are so often unorthodox and yet so often ringing true with an old-world authenticity.

Touching the very core of the malady of our age he says that our modern enlightenment seeks to cancel altogether the higher values and install instead the lower alone as true. Thus, for example, Marx and Freud, its twin arch priests, are brothers. Both declare that it is the lower, the under layer alone that matters: to one "the masses", to the other the instincts. Their wild imperative roars: "Sweep away this pseudo-higher; let the instincts rule, let the proletariat dictate!" But more characteristic, Monsieur Thibon has made another discovery which gives the whole value and speciality to his outlook. He says the moderns stress the lower, no doubt; but the old world stressed only the higher and neglected the lower. Therefore the revolt and wrath of the lower, the rage of Revanche in the heart of the Dispossessed in the modern world. Enlightenment meant till now the cultivation and embellishment of the Mind, the conscious Mind, the rational and nobler faculties, the height and the depth: and mankind meant the princes and the great ones. In the individual, in the scheme of his culture and

* *The Times Literary Supplement*, January 15, 1949

education, the senses were neglected, left to go their own way as they pleased; and in the collective field, the toiling masses in the same way lived and moved as best as they could under the economics of *laissez-faire*. So Monsieur Thibon concludes: "Salvation has never come from below. To look for it from above only is equally vain. No doubt salvation must come from the higher, but on condition that the higher completely adopts and protects the lower." Here is a vision luminous and revealing, full of great import, if we follow the right track, prophetic of man's true destiny. It is through this infiltration of the higher into the lower and the integration of the lower into the higher that mankind will reach the goal of its evolution, both individually and collectively.

But the process, Monsieur Thibon rightly asserts, must begin with the individual and within the individual. Man must "turn within, feel alive within himself", re-establish his living contact with God, the source and origin from which he has cut himself off. Man must learn to subordinate *having* to *being*. Each individual must be himself, a free and spontaneous expression. Upon such individuals, upon individuals grouped naturally in smaller collectivities and not upon unformed or ill-formed wholesale masses that a perfect human society can be and will be raised. Monsieur Thibon insists—and very rightly—upon the variety and diversity of individual and local growths in a unified humanity and not a dead uniformity of regimented oneness. He declares, as the reviewer of the *London Times* succinctly puts it: "Let us abolish our insensate worship of number. Let us repeal the law of majorities. Let us work for the unity that draws together instead of idolizing the multiplicity that disintegrates. Let us understand that it is not enough for each to have a place; what matters is that each should be in his right place. For the atomized society let us substitute an organic society, one in which every man will be free to do what he alone is qualified and able to do."

So far so good. For it is not far enough. The being or becoming that is demanded in fulfilment of the divine advent in humanity must go to the very roots of life and nature, must seize God in his highest and sovereign status. No prejudice of the past, no notion of our mental habits must seek to impose its law. Thus, for example, in the matter of redeeming the senses by the influx of the higher light, our author seems to consider that the senses will remain more or less as they are, only they will be controlled, guided, used by the higher light. And he seems to think that even the sex relation (even the institution of marriage) may continue to remain, but sublimated, submitted to the laws of the Higher Order. This, according to us, is a dangerous compromise and is simply the imposition of the lower

law upon the higher. Our view of the total transformation and divinisation of the Lower is altogether different. The Highest must come down wholly and inhabit in the Lowest, the Lowest must give up altogether its own norms and lift itself into the substance and form too of the Highest.

Viewed in this light Blake's memorable Mantra attains a deeper and more momentous significance. For it is not merely Earth—the senses and life and Matter that are to be uplifted and affianced to Heaven, but all that remains hidden within the bowels of the Earth, the subterranean regions of man's consciousness, the slimy viscous undergrowths, the darkest horrors and monstrosities that man and nature hide in their subconscient and inconscient dungeons of material existence, all these have to be laid bare to the solar gaze of Heaven, burnt or transmuted as demanded by the law of that Supreme Will. That is the Hell that has to be recognised, not rejected and thrown away, but taken up, purified and transubstantiated into the body of Heaven itself. The hand of the Highest Heaven must extend and touch the Lowest of the lowest elements, transmute it and set it in its rightful place of honour. A mortal body reconstituted into an immemorial fossil, a lump of coal revivified into a flashing carat of diamond—that shows something of the process underlying the nuptials of which we are speaking.

MATERNITY THE IDEAL OF WOMANHOOD?

Maternity was considered once upon a time as the highest ideal, if not the only ideal of womanhood. In modern times, however, a very large section of womankind has entered a vigorous protest against the all-sufficiency of that ideal. For evidently, they say, an exclusive preoccupation with that ideal deprives women of some of the very best advantages given to man, advantages that should go equally to all, man or woman, irrespective of the sex to which one belongs. The cultivation of pure knowledge, of the arts and sciences, participation in the public works related to the country and the world in general, taking an active part in the larger and higher spheres of human endeavour—all these are very much restricted and fettered for women, the major course of their life energy being diverted in another direction.

It has been asserted, on the contrary,—how much through masculine egotism and domination, one can question—that that is the normal and natural division of labour between man and woman, it is God's ordinance and Nature's Law: woman to remain at home and beget children, be busy with *oikonomia* and man to concern himself with the *res publica.* To glorify

the legend and remove or conceal the sting of invidious distinction it was declared that man may create, but woman creates the creators!

A compromise was once suggested which would sound like a joke. It was originally, I think, a Greek conception and then latterly taken up by that bizarre genius, Nietzsche. The ideal suggested was that each man should have two women, a wife and a concubine, the wife to produce children and the concubine to be the comrade and helper in man's higher preoccupations. It was a bizarre ideal, stated blandly like that—not however without some basis in facts of life. We are reminded of the famous Upanishadic legend of Yajnavalkya and his two wives. But however odd, the suggestion offers a solution, a way out in a new direction. That is to say, women who choose maternity as their life ideal will naturally follow that path: but they who choose the other path—the path considered to be exclusively or mainly man's path—should be left free to do so. As among men, the majority follow the ordinary life and only a comparatively few who leave the world and take to the spiritual life, but these few get ample freedom, scope and even encouragement in their pursuit, even so women too who wish to follow the so-called manly path (it may be after all a human path) should have similar facilities and the same encouragement. It is true that women are not theoretically debarred (although even that has happened in human history among certain people and in certain ages) from following the spiritual and ascetic life or even the larger public life, but that has been against the current. Their number in this line is very limited and the conditions imposed are heavy and even forbidding and imply, as we have said, invidious distinction. In India the Sannyasinis enjoy a comparatively free life, but the nunnery under certain prevalent orders is a different proposition.

But that is not what we meant to say. The modern age demands a radically revolutionary outlook. It declares that a good part,—even if not the whole—of the distinction between man and woman is artificial and that must go. The distinction has been allowed to grow and establish itself through habit, through a biassed education, through custom that has become an obsession and a second nature. But all that can change through a reorientation of education and acquisition of new habits and the development of a new custom and nature. Votes for women, co-education, vocational training and career for women are so many external expressions of a movement that seeks to obliterate altogether the ancient distinction made out to be a fundamental law of Nature.

One may cite here the example of Jeanne d'Arc, that extraordinary phenomenon in history—a phenomenon of elemental power and prophecy.

She embodied a conception of human relations that has not been adequately appreciated and valued. Her patriotic work has overshadowed this other and more abiding contribution of hers to human culture and evolution. Indeed it was precisely one of the charges brought against her as being unsocial and even anti-social. The builders of humanity have to undergo this calvary: there seems to exist no other way to redeem Nature. Socrates taught young men to think for themselves, to reason before coming to any conclusion, not to take for granted anything without submitting it to a crucial test of analysis, not even the existence of the gods. He was condemned as a corrupter of youths. Even so, Jeanne attired as a man, riding a horse and battling as a soldier, living with men and among men as one of them, without the least thought of her being a woman—well, it was an extraordinary challenge, the very denial of social and moral values. We can think also in this context of Diana the Huntress. The Eternal Virgin dressed like a hunter, even as a man, with the perfect gait of what is ideally human: but gods are gods and, it will be said, man can ill afford to copy what is non-human or superhuman.

Is it so? That is the question that has to be put and clarified. A human race, wedded to the usual norms of humanity, may, if it chooses, maintain the distinction of man and woman according to its mental light and vital and physical necessities and build up its pattern of social life, as indeed it has done in the past. But if there is to be something else than mere humanity, if there is to be a divine race of human beings, then in that case we must forget the past as much as possible, or ring in the earliest and the most ancient note that mankind uttered through its inspired visionaries: "thou can be named young boy or young girl"—*twam kumara uta va kumari.* The soul is sexless, and a body that is the radiant vehicle and instrument of the soul must partake of something of that divine asexuality. It is not that there will be no distinction; but verily it will be, in a deeper sense, a case of distinction without difference. Sex, physical sex need not give the only or the most fundamental difference between man and woman —that difference arose and was maintained so long as man remained an animal in a major part of him. However, whatever difference there will be will not depend upon these external factors and we need not speculate upon it at the present stage. The first thing needed is the obliteration of the difference branded by Ignorance; as knowledge grows, illumination comes, the transforming force acts the true difference that derives from the principle of unity in diversity that is Nature's, will make its appearance. One need not fear a dead and dull uniformity: that is the law neither of Nature nor of Supernature.

CHOOSE TO BE CHOSEN

THEY cry: "We sing for the bliss of Beauty."
I murmur: "I sing to woo Thy Grace."
"O lovely Art!"—they applaud in chorus.
I sigh: "How fleeting—loveliness!"

Melody they'll explore in music.
Thy answering throb is my one quest
To hear Thy Flutelet calling . . . calling
In Brindaban Thy love possessed.

They claim: Song's daedal thrill is magic
Whose heart the elect alone perceive.
I can no longer acclaim phantom
Intoxication's pale reprieve.

How can they see whose eyes are hooded?
For the pen of Art they lose Thy sky.
Not they who are are touched by Thee: glad captives,
For Thee alone they'll live or die.

When Thou, Soul-witcher, the soul invadest,
Where Thou art missed—nought shall enthrall
And even nectar is then sundered
From its savour and sap beyond recall!

Now in my song Art's tinkle silence
And the void with Thine own harmonies fill
To make my voice a ravished echo
Of canticles thou wouldst reveal.

DILIP KUMAR ROY

CONSCIOUSNESS

CONSCIOUSNESS is not an unaccountable freak or a chance growth or a temporary accident in a material and inconscient universe.

It may so appear on the surface, and physical science, since by its very terms it is limited to the examination of appearances and must start from the surface phenomenon, may choose to treat it on that basis or may have no alternative owing to its lack of a deeper means of knowledge. But surface appearances are not the reality of things, they may be a part of the truth but they are not the whole reality. One must get away from or push aside the appearances of things before one can know things in themselves: especially first appearances are apt to be deceptive. It is not by regarding a flash of lightning as a chance ebullition of fiery temper in a cloud that one can know the truth of electricity. We must go far and dig deep before we can get at the truth about the Force that manifested the lightning. Consciousness may similarly appear as a phenomenon, an outbreak of sentience in the obscurity of nescient being; but we must go far beyond that specious appearance if we would know the true nature and origin and discover the entire possibilities of this apparently strange and anomalous force. For anomalous it is, since it occurs in a fundamentally inconscient universe of Matter, and strange and curious it is in its reactions, aberrations, workings, destiny.

Physical science—and psychology in its present methods is only an extension of physical science—conducts its search into things from down upwards; it regards Matter as foundation, the bottom of things and having searched into that foundation, got, as it thinks, to the very bottom; it believes, or once believed, it has by that very fact understood their depths, their centre, their height and top. But this is a naive error. The truth of things is in their depths or at their centre and even at their top. The truth of consciousness also is to be found at its top and in its depths or at its centre; but when we enter into the depths of consciousness or when we try to reach its centre we go off into trance, and likewise before we get to its top we go off into trance.

Our searches into Matter also are vitiated by the fact that in Matter consciousness is in a trance and gives no apparent response to our probings. In living Matter, not yet mental, still subconscious, it does give sometimes a reply, but not one that we can understand, and, as for mind in the animal, it is only consciousness half-awakened out of the original trance of incon-

scient Matter: even in the human being it starts from an original nescience, its expressions, its data, all that we can ordinarily observe of it, are the movements of Ignorance fumbling for knowledge. We cannot understand from these alone what consciousness really is nor discover its source or its supreme possibilities, or its limits, if indeed it has any limits and is not like being itself infinite and illimitable. Only if we can get away from this imperfection and ignorance to some top of its possibilities or to its latent depths or some hidden centre and remain awake there, not plunging into nether inconscience or disappearing into all-incommunicable superconscience, can we discover its true nature and through it the very self and reality of our being.

How do we know that there is a top to consciousness or an inner centre, since these are not apparent on the face of things? By its supernormal, not its normal manifestations and phenomena, for the top of things is always supernormal, it is only the bottom and what is near to the bottom and based on it that are normal, at any rate to our ordinary consciousness in the material universe. Especially we can know by the supernal becoming normal to us—by Yoga.

1st September, 1947 SRI AUROBINDO

A DEFENCE OF INDIAN CULTURE (4)*

(Continued from the last issue)

THE whole root of difference between Indian and European culture springs from the spiritual aim of Indian civilisation and the turn which this aim gives to all the rich and luxuriant variety of its forms and rhythms, since even what it has in common with other cultures gets from that turn a unique character, a stamp of striking originality. I have given throughout this account of the framework of the Indian idea from the outlook of an intellectual criticism, because that is the standpoint of the critics who affect to disparage its value, and it was as well to show that Indian culture must be adjudged even from this alien outlook to have been the creation of a wide and noble communal spirit, inspired in the heart of its being by a lofty principle, illumined with a striking and uplifting idea of individual manhood and its powers and possible perfection, aligned to a spacious plan of social architecture, enriched by a great and vivifying life-power as well as by strong intellectual and artistic creation; but that does not give an adequate account of its spirit or its greatness. One might describe Greek or Roman civilisation from this outlook and miss little that was of importance; but Indian civilisation was not only a great cultural system, it was an immense religious effort of the human spirit. The spiritual aspiration was its governing idea, core of thought, ruling passion; not only did it make spirituality the highest aim of life, but tried, as far as that could be done in the past conditions of the human race—a complete success in this effort can only come in the future,—to turn the whole of life towards spirituality. But since the native form of the spiritual impulse is religion, the predominance of the spiritual idea and its endeavour to take hold of life necessitated the filling of every circumstance of life with the religious sense, the casting of thought and action into the religious mould, a religio-philosophic culture. The highest spirituality moves high above that lower stage of seeking to which religious form and dogma belong, does not easily bear or at any rate it transcends their limitations, lives in an experience which to the formal religious mind is unintelligible; but man cannot arrive immediately at that inner elevation. He needs some support, some scaffolding of dogma, worship, image, sign, form, symbol, mixed half-natural motive to build up in him the temple of the

* Reprinted from the *Arya*, Vol. VI

spirit. Only when that is done can the support be removed, the scaffolding disappear. The religious culture which now goes by the name of Hinduism, —though it gave itself no name, set to itself no sectarian limits, but was only a continuously enlarging tradition of the Godward endeavour of the human spirit, the eternal religion, *sanātana dharma*,—was an immense provision for such a self-building. To understand the sense and spirit of Indian culture we must have a just and right appreciation of the sense and spirit of Indian religion.

The European critics of Indian religion have often expressed an inability to make ou what this religion is, what is its soul and what is the form of its body. - tal misunderstandings have been advanced such as the idea that there is no Hindu religion, but only a Hindu social system with a bundle of the most disparate religious beliefs and institutions, or the precious dictum that Hinduism is a mass of folk-lore with an ineffective coat of metaphysical daubing. These misunderstandings spring always from the total difference of outlook on religion between the Indian and the normal western mind, a difference so great that it can only be bridged by a wide spiritual culture and a philosophical training for which the forms of religion in the West make no provision. To the Indian mind dogma is the least important part of religion, the religious spirit matters, not the dogma: but to the western mind a fixed intellectual belief is the most important part of a cult, its core of meaning, the thing that distinguishes it and makes it either a false or a true religion. That notion is a consequence of the western idea that intellectual truth is the highest verity. The Indian religious thinker believes, on the contrary, that all the highest eternal verities are truths of the spirit, intellectual truth only one of the doors to it, and since intellectual truth turned towards the Infinite must be not one but many-sided, the most varying intellectual beliefs may be equally true because they mirror different facets, form, however separated by intellectual distance, so many side-entrances which admit us into the precincts of the eternal Verity. All religions are true in their own way and degree, they are some of the thousand paths to the one Brahman; to use the language of the Gita, in whatever way men approach God, in that way he receives their seeking. What Indian religion consists in is, first, this belief in the one highest and universal Spiritual Being and the effort to grow consciously into the truth of a divine existence and, secondly, a traditional, many-branching and always enlarging way of knowledge and of spiritual or religious discipline. The first element is the most essential and tends at a certain pitch to overbear all differences, but the second though of a secondary, is still of a great importance. But the Indian religious tradition

is not merely the form of a religio-social system; however greatly that may count at the moment of a social departure, however stubbornly the conservative religious mind may oppose all social change, still the core of the matter is a point of spiritual, not of social discipline. Actually we find religions like Sikhism which broke down the social tradition, counted in the Vedic family, while the Jains who observe the custom and intermarry with Hindus, were traditionally considered to be outside the fold because their religious system seemed in its origin a denial of and a departure from the spiritual continuity. This subject of Indian religion is too vast and complex for adequate treatment in brief limits. I will confine myself here to the point at issue, the central ideas of the religion and their actual bearing on the life and cultural aims of the individual and the society. It is the spiritualising and vitalising power of the religion that is denied: that power must be our main subject of appreciation.

The first idea of all Indian religion is one common to the highest human thinking that the supreme truth of all existence is a Being or an existence beyond mental and physical appearances, a Spirit, a Self, an Infinite, an Eternal, a one transcendent, universal, original and sempiternal Divinity and that soul, Nature and life are only a manifestation or phenomenon of this self-aware Eternity. But this truth of being was not perceived by the Indian mind as a philosophical speculation, an idea to be played with by the thinker in his study, but otherwise void of practical bearing on life or a mystic sublimation which could be ignored in the dealings of man with life and Nature; it is a thing to be sought by all according to their degree of capacity, to be lived, to be made the governing idea of thought and life and action. It is for the Indian mind a religious truth and not simply a philosophical generalisation, it is even the one universal credo of Indian religion. The Infinite alone justifies the existence of the finite, the finite by itself has no entirely separate value or independent existence, but serves only as a manifestation of the glory of the Infinite and as a means by which the soul in Nature can approach, touch, feel and unite itself by love, knowledge, faith, adoration, a Godward will in works with the infinite Existence. The Self, the self-existent being is the one supreme reality, self-realisation is the great business of the living and thinking human being and all life and thought are a means of the progress towards self-realisation. Whether we consider the real self of man to be indivisibly one with the Supreme or universal self or different from him in Nature and an eternal soul of the divine Nature, or hold God, Nature and the individual soul in man to be three different eternal powers of the being, the truth of the Self holds with equal force, since even to the Indian dualist God is the supreme self and

reality in whom and by whom Nature and man live, move and have their being and, if you eliminate God from his view of things, Nature and man would lose for him all their meaning. The Spirit, universal Nature (whether called Maya, Prakriti or Shakti) and the soul in living beings, Jiva, are the three truths which are universally admitted by all the many religious sects and conflicting religious philosophies; universal also is the admission that the discovery of the inner spiritual self in man, the divine soul in him, and some kind of unity with God or supreme Self or eternal Brahman is the condition of spiritual perfection. According to our experience, we may variously regard God as an impersonal Divinity or a transcendent sempiternal and universal Person, but in either case it is admitted that he is in the heart and centre of all existence and all existence is in him and to find him is the great self-finding. The differences of credal belief are to the Indian mind only various ways of seeing the one self and Divinity. Self-realisation, to open to the inner Spirit, to live in the Infinite, to seek after and discover the Eternal, to be in union with God is the common religious idea, it is the sense given to spiritual salvation. That recognition of the highest spiritual truth and the highest spiritual aim is the first unity of Indian religion.

The spiritual genius of the Indian people, the claim of the Indian civilisation to be in the front rank as a spiritual culture, a supreme expression of the spiritual mind of humanity, would be sufficiently substantiated, if there were nothing else in its favour, by the single fact that it has made the greatest and widest spiritual truth seen with the boldest largeness and an unique intensity the grand uplifting idea of life, the core of all its thinking, the foundation of all its religion, the sense and aim of the whole being of humanity. The truth itself is not peculiar to Indian thinking; but elsewhere it has been in its whole largeness and living sincerity the property only of a few thinkers, mystics or exceptionally gifted spiritual natures, while the mass of men have had no perception of it, but lived only in the lower sectarian side of religion, inferior ideas of the Deity or in the outward aspects of life; but Indian culture did succeed by the strenuousness of its vision, the universality of its approach, the intensity of its seeking in stamping religion with the essential idea of a real spirituality and bringing some living reflection of it into every part of the religious field. Nothing can be more untrue than to say that the general religious mind of India has not at all grasped the higher spiritual or metaphysical truths of the Indian religion and has lived always in the externals only of rite and creed and shibboleth. The main metaphysical truths in their broad aspects have been stamped on the general mind of the people and are as familiar to the

man in the street and the worshipper in the temple as to the philosopher in his seclusion, the monk in his monastery and the saint in his hermitage, while the spiritual reality to which they lead has permeated the religion, the literature, the art, even the popular songs of the nation.

No doubt, these things are realised by the mass of men more readily through the fervour of devotion than by a strenuous effort of thinking. No doubt, too, the tendency to put too much stress on externals has always been there and worked to overcloud the deeper spiritual tendency,—that is a common failing of human nature,—and it has needed a constant stream of saints and religious thinkers and the teaching of illuminated Sannyasins to keep the reality vivid and resist the deadening weight of form and ceremony. But the fact remains that these messengers of the spirit have not been wanting, nor has there been wanting the readiness of the common mind to listen to the message. The ordinary materialised souls, the external minds who are in India as everywhere the majority,—how easy it is for the superior European critic to forget this common fact of our humanity and treat it as a peculiar sin of the Indian mentality!—have at least this distinction that they are by centuries of training nearer to the inner realities, divided from them by a less thick veil of the universal ignorance and more easily led back to a vital glimpse of God and Spirit, self and eternity. Where else could the lofty, austere and difficult teaching of a Buddha have seized so rapidly on the popular mind or the songs of a Tukaram, a Kabir, the Sikh gurus, the chants of the Tamil saints with their fervid devotion but also their profound philosophy found so speedy an echo and formed a popular religious literature? This strong permeation and readiness of the mind of a whole nation to turn to the highest realities is the sign and fruit of an agelong, a real and still living supremely spiritual culture.

The variety of Indian philosophy and religion, interminable and bewildering to the European mind, which seems often unable to see the forest because of the richness and luxuriance of its vegetation and misses the common spiritual life in the multitude of its forms, is itself, as Vivekananda pertinently pointed out, a sign of a superior religious culture. The Indian mind has always realised that the Supreme is the Infinite and perceived that to the soul in Nature the Infinite must always present itself in an infinite variety of aspects. The aggressive and quite illogical idea of a single religion for all mankind, a religion universal by the very force of its narrowness, one set of dogmas, one cult, one system of ceremonies, one ecclesiastical ordinance, one array of prohibitions and injunctions, which all minds must accept on peril of persecution by men and spiritual rejection or eternal punishment by God, that grotesque creation of human unreason which

has been the parent of so much intolerance, cruelty and obscurantism and aggressive fanaticism, has never been able to take firm hold of the Indian mentality. Men everywhere have common human failings; intolerance and narrowness especially in the matter of observances there has been and is in India, violence of theological disputation, querulous bickerings of sects and their pretensions of spiritual superiority, sometimes, at one time especially in southern India in a period of acute religious differences, even local outbreaks of active mutual tyranny and cruelty. But these things have never taken the proportions which they assumed in Europe; they have been confined for the most part to the minor forms of polemical attack, intolerance and social obstruction or ostracism and have transgressed very little across the line to the major forms of persecution. Behind these weaknesses of human egoism there has stood always in India the saving perception of the higher spiritual mind, which has had its effect on the mass mentality, the living perception that since the minds, the temperaments, the intellectual affinities of men are unlimited in their variety, a perfect liberty of thought and of worship must be allowed to the individual in his approach to the Infinite.

Authority of spiritual experience and knowledge was recognised, but also development by varying spiritual experience and knowledge. Even in the days of decline when the claim of authority became excessive, there was still left the saving perception that there could not be one but must be many authorities and a certain readiness to acknowledge new light capable of enlarging the old tradition. Indian civilisation did not develop its earlier political and social liberties,—that greatness of freedom belongs to the West,—but freedom of thought and spiritual liberty have always been among its constant traditions. The atheist and the agnostic were free from persecution; Buddhism and Jainism might be declared unorthodox relgions, but they lived freely side by side with the traditional creeds and philosophies and as much of their truths as was assimilable was taken into the stock of the common and enlarging spiritual continuity. This continuity was carefully conserved, but at the same time admitted light from all quarters. In latter times the saints who reached some fusion of the Hindu and the Islamic spiritual teachings, were recognised as teachers of the Hindu religion. The Yogin who developed a new path of Yoga, the religious teacher who founded a new order, the thinker who built up a novel statement of the truths of spiritual being, found no serious obstacle to their practice or propaganda. At most they had to meet the instinctive opposition of the priest and pundit to any change of the tradition, and this had only to be lived down for the new element to be

received into the free and pliant body of the national religion.

At the same time the necessity of a spiritual order as well as a spiritual freedom was perceived, and this was provided for in various ways; first, by the recognition of an enlarging number of authorised scriptures, some of a common authority, others peculiar to sects or schools, some of an absolute, other of a relative binding force, but all open to a large freedom of interpretation; secondly, by the power of family and communal tradition, *kuladharma*, persistent but not entirely immutable; thirdly, by the religious authority of the Brahmins, who as priests were the custodians of observance and as scholars, a more respected role than the officiating priesthood, the exponents of religious tradition; finally, and very characteristically, by the succession, *paramparā*, of Gurus or spiritual teachers who preserved the continuity of a spiritual system handed down from generation to generation but could enrich and develop its significance and practice. The evolution of the Vaishnava religion, its succession of saints and teachers, the developments given to it by Ramanuja, Madhwa, Chaitanya, Vallabhacharya and its recent stirrings of survival after a period of languor and of some fossilisation, present one notable instance of this living continuity. A more striking example was the founding of the Sikh religion, its long line of Gurus, the last development given to it by Guru Govinda Singh in the democratic institution of the Khalsa. The creation of a sort of divided pontifical authority by Shankaracharya, transmitted from generation to generation, the Buddhist Sangha and its councils, the Sikh Khalsa, the adoption of the congregational form called Samaj by the modern reforming sects are instances of an attempt at a more compact and stringent order. But it is noteworthy that the freedom and innate directness of the Indian religious mentality have prevented it from initiating anything like the overblown ecclesiastical orders and hierarchies which in the West have imposed the tyranny of their yoke on spiritual liberty.

This instinct at once for order and freedom in any field of human activity is a sign in that field of a high natural capacity, and a people which could devise such a union of religious liberty and orderly religious evolution, must be credited with a high capacity for religion, even as they cannot be denied the inevitable fruit of it, a great ancient and still living spiritual culture. The freedom of religious thought and experience, the provision of a flexible framework and means of a stable and powerful evolution have given to Indian civilisation its marvellous wealth of many-sided philosophies, great scriptures and profound religious works, religions which approach God from every side of his infinite being, Yogas, systems of psycho-spiritual discipline and self-finding, suggestive forms, symbols, ceremonies which

train the mind at all stages of development to turn Godwards, a firm structure capable of bearing a large tolerance and assimilative spirit, a vivacity, intensity, multitudinousness of experience, a freedom from the unnatural European divorce between knowledge and religion, the claims of the intellect and the claims of the spirit, a long endurance and infinite capacity of revival which make it stand out today as the most remarkable and living of all religious systems. The nineteenth century has thrown on Indian religion its tremendous shock of negation and scepticism without being able to destroy its roots of assured spiritual knowledge. Disturbed for a while because found by this attack in a moment of depression, India has revived and responded by a fresh outburst of spiritual activity and is preparing for a great new life and transformation and a farther evolution in the inexhaustible infinities of spiritual experience.

The fundamental idea of Indian religion, the recognition of a one and infinite Godhead who can be approached and worshipped through any of his infinite aspects, a supreme and supracosmic Existence which manifests itself in the cosmos and enters into multitudinous relations with the souls in the universe who are one with or part of its own being, gives a many-sided appearance to Indian cult and spiritual experience which is a constant stumbling block to understanding by European minds accustomed to the rigid impoverishing definitions and strict exclusions of the religious thinking of Europe. The European critic is struck by what seems to him the immense mass and intricacy of a polytheistic cult crowned at its summit by a belief in the One which he cannot distinguish from pantheism. He applies with an obstinate prejudgement the ideas and definitions of his own thinking and by this illegitimate importation fixes false values on Indian spiritual conceptions. The Indian mind on the contrary is averse to intolerant exclusions. A great force of intuitions and inner experience has given it from the beginning what the mind of the West is only now arriving at with great difficulty, the cosmic consciousness, the cosmic vision. When it sees the One without a second, it still admits his duality of Spirit and Nature, his many trinities, his million aspects. When it concentrates on a single limiting aspect of the Divinity and seems to see nothing beyond it, it has still at the back of its consciousness the sense of the All, the idea of the One. When it distributes its worship among many objects, it looks beyond the multitude of godheads to their unity. This synthetic turn is not peculiar to the mystics or the literate or the thinkers nourished on the high sublimities of the Veda and Vedanta, but permeates even the popular mind which is filled with the thoughts, the images, the traditions, the cultural symbols of the Purana and Tantra; for the Puranic

and Tantric ideas, names, forms and symbols are only concrete representations of the combined monism, unitarianism, universalism and synthetism of the Vedic scriptures.

Indian religion founds itself on the conception of the timeless Supreme who is beyond name or form, but it does not deny or abolish all intermediary forms, names, powers, personalities of this Divinity. Accordingly, it does not begin and end with a colourless monism or a transcendental Theism. The Godhead is worshipped as the All, the universal being; but Indian religion is not therefore pantheism, since beyond the universality it recognises the supracosmic eternity of the Divine Being. Indian polytheism is not polytheism; for the worshipper of many gods knows that all gods are forms, names, personalities, powers of the one Being and all goddesses are powers of the one divine Energy. Those ways of Indian cult which most resemble a popular form of Theism, are still something more because they do not exclude, but admit the many aspects of God and rest on and go upward to the philosophic truth of the one Deity. The later religious forms which most felt the impress of the Islamic idea or of western religious formulas, Nanak's worship of the timeless One, Akala, or the reforming creeds of today draw away from the anthropomorphic limitations of western monotheism: irresistibly they turn towards the truth of Vedanta. The personality of God and his human relations with man are strongly stressed by Vaishnavism and Shaivism, but they are not the whole of these religions. Indian religion cannot be described by any of these western definitions. In its totality it became a synthesis of all spiritual worship and experience, observed the one Truth from all its many sides, gave itself no specific name or limiting distinction, but only designations for its constituting cults and divisions. In its essential character, though strikingly distinguished from other creeds by its traditional scriptures, cults and symbols, it is not a credal religion but a vast, universal, many-sided and unifying system of spiritual culture.

To understand the effect of Indian spiritual culture on the life of the individual and the community, we must recognise this synthetical character and embracing unity. The One Existence to whom sages give different names of the Veda, the One without a second of the Upanishads, is the fundamental seeing of Indian spirituality. All comes from, exists in, returns and amounts to that One. To discover, closely approach, enter into whatever unity with this Infinite, this Eternal, is the height of spiritual experience. That is the first idea of the religious mind of India. The second idea is the manifold way of man's approach to the Eternal and Infinite. This Infinite is full of many infinites and each of these infinite aspects is

the Eternal in his glory. In the limitations of the cosmos God manifests himself to man and fulfils himself in the world in many ways, but each is the way of the Eternal; in each finite we can discover and through all things approach the Infinite. All cosmic powers and manifestations are of the One and behind the workings of Nature are to be seen and adored powers, names, personalities which are the godheads of the one Godhead. The divine Will and Energy are behind all happenings, whether to us fortunate or adverse, and over each way of the universal dealings stands a form of the presiding Deity. He creates and is Brahma, preserves and is Vishnu, destroys or takes to himself and is Rudra or Shiva. His supreme Energy is beneficent in upholding and protection and is the Mother of the worlds, Luxmi or Durga, or beneficent even in the mask of destruction and is Chundi or Kali, the dark Mother. He manifests himself in form of his qualities; the God of divine love of the Vaishnava, the God of divine power of the Shakta appear as two different godheads, but are the one Deity. These things we try to explain now as symbols, which is by the way of an intellectual compromise with modern rationalism; but the Indian religious mentality saw them not only as symbols but as realities, because between the highest spiritual being and material being it is aware of other psychological planes of consciousness and experience and these things are truths of these planes no less real than the outward truths of the material universe. Man approaches God at first according to his psychological nature, experience, capacity for this deeper experience, *swabhāva*, *adhikāra*, whence comes the variety of religious cult, belief and way of divine union. But also there is a third idea of strongest consequence, that not only through aspects of the universal spirit and all inner and outer Nature can the Divine be approached, but each individual object and being is in its spiritual being intimately one with the one divine Existence. In each individual man is the divinity, Narayana; all corporate or collective being is a form of the divine Narayana. God is in ourselves and in ourselves we have to find him. The supreme truth of all divisions is a secret unity. These three ideas govern the Indian religious mind and the seeing of them is its whole seeing. Indian spiritual culture opens up a hundred ways to arrive at the truth of our relgious being, but its consummation is to see God in man and man in God, God in Nature and Nature in God, God in all things and all things in God, and to go beyond them to their origin in the supracosmic Absolute, Eternal and Infinite. To see the Supreme altogether and in all ways and grow to be at one with him, that is the eternal religion, *esha dharmah sanātanah*.

SRI AUROBINDO

"THE FUTURE POETRY"
SOME COMMENTS

THIS rather long summary of Aurobindean Poetics must have brought home the deep personal, rather national, bias that colours his entire treatment of the subject. But before we pass on to necessarily brief comments of our own, it will be convenient to take, once more, a quick glance at the prospect covered. *The Future Poetry* opens with a review of Cousins' book, but soon after passes out of its immediate concern to issues more subtle and remote. The next seven essays (II-VIII) form a statement of the First Principles of Poetry, at the end of which begins a very surprising survey of English poetry from Chaucer to 'recent' poets like Whitman, A. E., Yeats and Tagore (IX-XXII). After this long run there is a momentary pause, a fresh taking of stocks in article XXIV, *New Birth or Decadence.* This done there is a transition to another series of essays (XXV-XXXI), a more elevated and intensified re-statement of the First Principles. Finally, a modest Conclusion pointing to the vision of Future Poetry. The exposition of the first principles as well as the historical survey give a greater probability to the analysis and anticipations which would otherwise look like a private fancy.

It "is a predominantly personal, even a temperamental survey," as Dr. Iyengar puts it, but at the same time and in another sense it is indeed impersonal, and Sri Aurobindo is but acting as an interpreter for all of us and the age we live in. He helps us to a greater understanding of our hidden and real selves, he points to psychological possibilities that we deny or disparage; he also enables us to apprehend the power, function and evolution of the poetic speech and the large lines of its future development.

It is a fair guess that these essays might be hailed as original, always a dangerous word. Where exactly, it can be asked, is the originality? Is not all of it implied in Indian aesthetics? Yet the originality is not imaginary at all. It lies, firstly, in his energetic exposition of the original formulations; there is something of the thrill and the *shakti* of supreme poetry in his prose commentary itself. Secondly, the originality comes out in the consistent and convincing application of the ancient method and motive to contemporary cultures, specifically to English poetry. The originality lies in the manner of statement and illustration.

Sri Aurobindo's is an inner view of things and his criticism brings the logic of the soul nearer to the earth. It is a theory that accounts for crea-

tive efforts of man down the ages and links it with the laws of his total evolution. Of course the initial response to such expostulation may be anything but friendly, and the point of view dismissed as a revival of transcendental aesthetics. For, if it has the reach and subtlety of all such endeavour it is at the same time, for minds accustomed to lesser heights (that is, to other points of view) not without many of its characteristic limitations.

In this the first obstacle that we come across is the notion of soul history which, however familiar in religious and metaphysical thinking, is totally foreign to our literary perspective. Naturally, this Progress of Poetry, moving through caverns unseen and measureless to man, will appear alien and esoteric to our normal perceptions and their characteristic ways of dealing with life and poetry. "The Englishman wants food that will stick to his ribs," said Dr. Johnson. And not the Englishman only. The mention of psychic *chakras* fills most of us with something akin to distrust. Of course classification of the ages or levels of poetry is nothing new. But faced with a literary criticism which believes in planes of the being and of inspiration and as facts rather than as metaphors, the literary critic feels his normalcy at stake. Even if, an evolution of the human mind, including the poetic mind, is accepted, the Aurobindean emphasis and interpretation reveal unusual aspects and inferences. For instance, the optimism of his anticipation is not easy to accept. *Mantra* in English Verse? Celtic, even Indian pioneering in the medium of English? It sounds too good to be true. But Sri Aurobindo means what he says, and this is exactly what he has done and also helped others to do. *The Future Poetry* along with his own later poems forms an irrefutable theory and practice of *mantric* verse. But even then can we not say that the whole thing is a *tour de force*, a vast rationalization, a phenomenon isolated and unique? Two incidental points of criticism of *The Future Poetry* are, firstly, that its account of recent poetry is today not recent enough. It would of course be something more than interesting to know his opinion about the avatars of modern poetry. Secondly, its omission of the 'metaphysical' poets. There is no doubt that if he ever revises the series these gaps will disappear.

A modern critic has suggested that a poet's sensibility is the expression of certain possible moods and attitudes of the national mind. The remark would be true if it is applied to the larger human mind. The course of English poetry *à la* Sri Aurobindo illustrates the successive stages of the human mind in its progressive manifestation. This is a view of the matter which few will accept because fewer have felt or known it like that. Many curious things have been said about (English) poetry, but none so curious as this, particularly the approving use it makes of the Indian tradition of

mantric verse. We may note here in passing that even if this evolution of the poetic mind is granted it is likely to end in some form of religionism or in the wheelings of the refined and speculative intelligence. There might be other variations. A *yoga* theory of art and life has still to wait for its day of acceptance. But the delay cannot be a serious objection if, as we think, its main tenets are sound. *Svalpam apyasya trāyete*, even a little of it will save. But then one must first wish to be saved. A greater incidence of sincerity and humility, a more decisive turning of the will is needed before Aurobindean criticism can come to its own, or its analysis and expectation understood. These ideal conditions may not be fulfilled at once and for the present we have to be content with beginnings, an uncertain groping towards it, many variations, even perversions.

There is another powerful stumbling-block to the admission and spread of this point of view,—the exclusiveness of Europe. Some years back Eliot speaking of his Sanskrit studies at Harvard has confessed his bewildered admiration for the intricacies of Patanjali and Indian metaphysics. He had also discovered that for understanding Indian thought many of the categories of European philosophy have to be scrapped. He had the honesty to say that for practical as well as sentimental reasons he could not do that. But this insularity in the sphere of ideas cannot long hold out. As Sri Aurobindo has said in a somewhat different context, "But the mind of the future will be more international than it is now."

To the mind of the future *The Future Poetry* will appear natural rather than novel. For what creates the novelty is our own ignorance rather denial of the psychology it assumes. In our realm of ideas the superconscient is conspicuously absent, it is only recently that the "subliminal consciousness" has acquired a doubtful domicile. As such most of the analysis in *The Future Poetry* is likely to be lost upon the general reader. To admit the excellence or unusualness of the criticism is not a proof that it has been understood. To many it may appear as being too fine by half, as a twisting of the content and significance of poetry to suit his own convenience. But it is difficult to deny being drawn, with a part of our being, to the vistas which he hints at or opens out before us; but with another, the weightier, more normal and unregenerate self, we draw back from all such "mysticism and moonshine". Verily, two genii dwell in our souls.

That this criticism should form part of a wider world-view is obvious. *The Future Poetry* is the literary supplement of *The Life Divine*, as *Savitri* is its poetic counterpart. Since Coleridge aesthetics has not been infused with metaphysics as in these pages. Sri Aurobindo's critique of vision has the additional advantage of being related to a tradition of culture, experience

and experiment. The air it breathes may be of the rare Sumeru heights, but it has been breathed; if the paradox is permitted, the future poetry of which it speaks has existed in the past, it is not a chimera of the mind. This basis in actuality and in definite psychological experience gives him a control over the transitions in thought which marks out his essay from similar idealistic attempts at poetic revaluation. It may be unusual but not obscure, and it is obscure mainly because we make it so, by denying facts and traditions that have always existed. *The Future Poetry* is a complete statement of directions and distinctions that sensitive criticism has always felt rather than known. When the air is clea ed of cleverness and of partial opinions, *The Future Poetry* will be recognised for what it is as the most correct and considerable work of aesthetics of our times, an aesthetics that justifies and satisfies the highest and legitimate end of an evolving humanity. Its influence on the future of poetry and criticism is likely to grow and endure.

SISIR GHOSH

SCIENCE—AND THE INFINITE

"ALL can be done by the Divine—the heart and nature purified, the inner conscience awakened, the veils removed—if one gives oneself to the Divine with trust and confidence and even if one cannot do so fully at once, yet the more one does so, the more the inner help and guidance comes and the experience of the Divine grows within. If the questioning mind becomes less active and humility and the will to surrender grow, this ought to be perfectly possible. No other strength and tapasya are then needed, but this alone." *

Here in less than 100 words is the formula for successful living according to the yoga of Sri Aurobindo. To those with even a little experience of the divine manifestation how simple and sweeping, how direct and powerful, is the magic of this prescription for human existence! What baffles the mind is the sheer simplicity of the idea that surrender to the Divine —to God, in the Western sense—is the whole of man's duty, man's highest hope, and all man's science. It is so simple as to seem not only naive, but positively silly. The complexities of nature, of matter, of the universe, revealed by the almost miraculous achievements of scientific intelligence, determination, and heroism, put the modern mind in awe of and under the spell of what it understands by modern science. And, justifiably so, if the facts are intelligently reviewed. Mankind, especially in the West, has been devotedly served by the great minds and great spirits of its champions in the arena of its sciences. It has been given such knowledge and power over the materials, and forces, of our planet that it can destroy or encourage life with godlike ease. Only the last citadel of nature remains unconquered—although, to be sure, this happens to be the only one that really matters to mankind. It is the very inner repository of the final secret of life; it contains the raison d'etre of existence. Although it assailed this inner Keep of nature for a long time, by many methods of attack, Science is still generally undecided either as to the nature of the secret inside or as to how to get at it.

The secret is, of course—how is mankind to be made happy?

After all, nothing else than this matters to humanity anywhere, anyhow, at any time. To be able to fly through the air at 600 miles an hour is splendid —but has it increased man's happiness? To relieve man's diseases and

* *Letters of Sri Aurobindo*, First Series, p. 79.

pains is noble and surely wise—so long as one doesn't open him up to more subtle and worse ones in the doing of it. To know or be able to calculate the composition and behaviour of the elemental forces of our universe is a glorious achievement of the human intellect—so long as it doesn't open up the possibility of the wholesale destruction of the human race. That man should build machines to do his work for him is clever, so long as the machines do not enslave him. To alter the geography of the countryside for his convenience, to create and develop artificial foods, to specialise his labour in complex industries, is all to his benefit—so long as his essential bodily mechanism and spiritual powers are not impaired by these processes. In short, and without beating about the bush, it must be evident to any free and civilised intelligence that all the achievements of science up to date have not helped mankind appreciably nearer to happiness. Special pleading will urge that this, that, or the other benefit has been achieved that has made some section of humanity happier—or less miserable—than it used to be. But all the just and proper claims of scientific achievement can be freely granted, while still leaving science to answer the question—What is the final secret for the fulfilment and happiness of a human being?—by saying "I don't know".

The scientist may, quite properly and justifiably, say—"I don't know and I don't care; my task is exploration, not the satisfaction of human desires or even aspirations. My star is the 'questioning mind' and I am led by my mind to dissect, examine, calculate, and speculate upon everything to which it leads me." There is, however, in this quite proper position one fundamental defect, so far as suffering humanity is concerned; it is the obvious impossibility of the questioning mind to lead the scientist to any other objective than it knows, or can bring within its power. Obviously the mind cannot know anything outside its own plane of realisation, and so the scientist's attention cannot legitimately (in the strictly scientific sense) be directed to anything outside the range of observation of his mind. This difficulty has been solved by academic science, up to now, by the simple expedient of stoutly denying that there was anything of interest to humanity outside the range of the human mind, anyway; by asserting in general that anything that could not be subjected to mental analysis was stuff and nonsense. But time marches on and so does the human spirit; what satisfied our grandparents may not convince us. The World-spirit has taken a rough hand in events over the past life-time and has shaken a lot of grandfatherly notions out of the human consciousness, as it has also been enabled some new conceptions to be put in.

Of all the ideas that time has rendered stale and questionable, to at least a significant portion of intelligent humanity, no doubt the most important is that of the sacred integrity of materialism in which is included the function of the concrete mind. Indeed, there is a crisis in the position of faith in purely material values and this has much to do with the clouds of war once again hanging over our planet. The conflict is not emerging as a sharp and clean-cut divergence of faiths, e. g. matter versus spirit, but rather in the practical worship which is to be granted to purely local (or national) material considerations, as against wider and more idealised ones, even if these are still generally contained within the formula of self-interest.

"If the questioning mind becomes less active, and humility and the will to surrender grow"*, it is suggested that it should be possible to remove some of the veils from the mystery of life or, to go back to the original metaphor, to penetrate the inner Keep of nature and discover the final and all-significant secret of human fulfilment. So this, then, is the new approach to the problem and the new clue to human research and endeavour! The questioning mind is to become less active, or rather is to be relegated to its proper sphere in life and forbidden to invade those areas in which it has no warrant or power. Concurrently, two new powerful forces are brought forwards as potentially significant to the search for happiness—humility and the will to surrender. Indeed, science having followed the questioning mind to the limits of its horizons, and without having done much more for humanity than change its living habits, is now invited to join forces with—Yoga.

The yoga of Sri Aurobindo is directed towards leading the human spirit to fulfilment and happiness. There are other yogas, of course, with the same general objective though using different means. The essence of all means, however, is the elimination of the mind—the questioning mind—as the sole guide to knowledge. Yoga starts where formal science stops, though there is evidence for believing that in its final achievements it will recapitulate, re-present, and reaffirm all, or most, of the knowledge gained by science. There is, then, no conflict between science and yoga, but they are in a real and practical sense complementary to each other.

The mind has been in charge of human affairs so long that its position has grown very strong. To invite the average educated person to set aside the evidence of his normal senses and his reason and to "look within" for guidance of his life might generally bring ridicule. He has hardly been used to thinking that he has anything within to look to. Yet when he is brought

* *Vide supra*

to realise the part played by his "feelings", even when these are opposed to the dictates of his "mind", he may well begin to see that his consciousness is very much wider than his mental faculties. Then he will probably remember some experiences quite outside the normal run of his emotional life—the ecstasy of being in love, the subtle uplifting of his spirit through aesthetic appreciation and so on. If he is very intelligent he will perceive that for a longer or shorter period he was then in a wider consciousness than his normal one. The word "eternal" will possibly occur to him as vaguely descriptive of the quality of this larger life of which he has had a glimpse. Lovers' vows are commonly based on eternity, and it is no warrant for vulgar amusement that such vows are often broken, apparently so easily. When the avowal was made the lover saw clearly the element of eternity in his bond with his beloved, and vowed only what he honestly saw and experienced. Unhappily for him the vision faded, but this is no evidence of the unreality of its cause. Indeed, having once seen and lived in it makes strong evidence that it can be seen and lived in again, if only one can find out how. One may have seen Rome once and have memories of it, and the way back is known; to have such memories of the eternal is not unusual but the way back is not so well known or so easy, though yoga is the means.

This wider consciousness is not uncommon; actually it must be an exceptional individual who has never experienced it. The trouble is that it is not recognised, either at the time or later, for what it is—a glimpse of a vaster and truer life than the one lived normally. It is only too apt to be written off as a mental aberration, a fancy of no account. If it is too strong and vivid to be laughed off it may be given a scientific label of some sort and, such is the hypnotic effect of "science", this will seem to dispose of it once and for all. But sooner or later will come a time when these subtler experiences cannot be denied their right to be considered as evidence of a wider reality; they will be found to integrate and to point in a definite direction. They will not allow themselves to be gainsaid by the questioning mind, but will gradually turn the nature, as it were, inside out—so that the "inner" life becomes more vivid and real and compelling than the externalities of living.

There are many intelligent, sensitive people in the world to-day who are at this critical point in their spiritual careers. They may be growing bewildered and discouraged by the offerings of pure science, and many will establish or re-establish their faiths in conventional religious channels, or in formal moralities. The use of the word "faith" is significant at this stage, for, by now, this will have lost the stigma it may once have possessed. It will be felt that the life by faith is stronger, more permanent, more

satisfactory, than the life by reason. Faith, for spiritually alert people, will walk hand-in-hand with reason but gradually taking over the leadership of the will.

The grand climax in the search for happiness—for we have never got away from this theme—will be the discovery that it is only to be found fully, and exclusively, by union with the Divine. The knowledge that this is and must be so will, no doubt, long precede the achievement of any consistent experience of true happiness or bliss. Indeed, the knowledge will generally co-exist for some time with a greater or less amount of personal sorrow and distress. To give oneself to the Divine is—to give oneself. To give up every last one of the particularities and cherished personal traits, memories, and possessions that set us apart from the rest of the world. To gain divinity we must become anonymous, non-entities, in the first sense of the word. This must involve pain to an individual who has fought his way up the ladder of experience to such strength of egocentric personality as to be able to stand alone by his own knowledge and power. Having gained his place in life by his courage and prowess, he must surrender it. This must be distressing to that part of his nature which, in future, takes service under a new Master.

There is also the grim matter of his past to be redeemed, and payment of his fines within the scale and standard of the equities of Fate will cost him some pain.

But through all his trials, perils, and sorrow there will be the beckoning Light of the Divine. He will come to believe intensely that "all can be done by the Divine—the heart and nature purified, the inner conscience awakened, the veils removed"—if only he gives himself to the Divine "with trust and confidence. Even if he cannot do so fully at once, yet the more he does so, the more the inner help and guidance comes and the experience of the Divine grows within". As "the questioning mind becomes less active, and humility and the will to surrender grow", this will be possible. No other strength than that of the Divine is needed, and this is his for the deserving.

A. L. Crampton Chalk

RAJYAM SAMRIDDHAM

"There's joy, empire and victory."
—Shelley

THE aim of human life since the beginning of civilization has been the attainment of utter freedom. This freedom is not however nihilistic, but conceives of a supreme order. So the poet dreamt of 'empire and victory', i.e. freedom from all bondages and triumph over all blind forces, the spirit taking in its embrace a vast empire—the infinity. Metaphysically speaking, the human soul has to uplift itself into the super-soul and realise itself as the particular expression of the Vast. This is what we call, in common parlance, owing allegiance to the Divine, and man has prayed for the advent of 'Thy kingdom'—establishment of 'Dharma rajya'.

In the Gita Sri Krishna at first urged Arjuna to fight and get *rājyam samṛddham*—in the popular sense; i. e. to fight and conquer the empire of Bharata. But this failed to inspire the worthy disciple. So the Lord himself explained later that it was not merely a man's empire that he wanted him to conquer but really an empire of righteousness. And Krishna said further that for establishing this *dharma rājya—dharma saṁsthāpanārthāya* —the Lord takes his birth from age to age—*sambhavāmi yuge yuge*. The seeker of the Divine yearns for the establishment of this divine empire, in which man owes allegiance to none but the Divine and lives for the fulfilment of the Divine will—'Thy will be done'.

In the earthly evolution, however, all men are not endowed with this glorious vision. In his ignorance man obscurely glimpses it, but distorts it in the process of materialisation. So from ancient times men have founded empires—secular as well as theocratic—which however have served their evolutionary purpose. There were vast secular empires in ancient times and middle ages, until in the twentieth century all empires are in the process of liquidation, as prophesied years back by Sri Aurobindo. Theocratic empires too had their days in Europe and certain areas of Asia: today these have only historical interest. Imperialism, however, seems prone to take subtle and newer shapes—mainly economic and ideological; and maybe, in this sphere the last of the clashes will take place until man's spirit throws off the last of ideological shackles and finds fulfilment in Divine amplitude. Then alone man's age-old dream of the advent of the Divine kingdom will be realised.

Here comes the question of practical realisation; for man's mind is not satisfied until he has a plan. The sceptic has the facile rider, 'We had utopias galore', 'O, we had any number of prophets', etc. etc. But we have to accept the postulate that man's plan is not the divine plan. Man's all plans are at best half-way houses. These have their importance as every human element has its importance in the scheme of Nature. In fact, as has been pointed out by the Gita, these are created by Prakriti in her grosser manifestations. It is evident, man cannot at this stage of evolution chalk out exactly what is the Divine plan.

Shall we then have to grope in the dark, as we feel we have done so far? No, we need not give ourselves up in despair and move helplessly in a vicious circle. But we cannot but accept the basic truth that to know of the Divine plan we must enter what may be called the Divine mind. As Sri Aurobindo says, the Divine has His logic; but man's logic deals with the finite, while the Divine's with infinity. The Divine's plan is endless, as in fact creation is endless.

Again we seem to be bogged down into what may be called the 'quick sands' of mysticism. Really we need not. We have the eternal assurance that even if we cannot easily know the Divine mind we can feel, if we are so inclined, the Divine heart, which is not outside but inside us. That's really "the golden chain that binds us to the throne of God." That is, as the Mother says the eternal flame deep within us. This flame is our only and sure guide in the upward path. This flame reveals ourselves ultimately as the sons of God and enables us to realise "joy, empire and victory" of the Spirit.

Once we take up the attitude as sons of God and gradually realise ourselves as 'the eternal portion of Divine', our whole outlook on life changes and we begin to feel that we have to live not what is called the ordinary or normal life, but our basic aim is to realise divine life. But divine does not mean something extraordinary or abnormal. At the same time, it is not also the commonplace—things as they appear. The Divine transcends the extraordinary as well as the commonplace. It radically changes all values, although it does not imply a continuous flutter in the erratic. For our soul and being, and ultimately our mind, life and body, it implies what Sri Aurobindo calls a new birth. The human elements are then gradually metamorphosed into divine ones. What ultimately happens does not happen according to our limited conceptions, but is determined by the Divine himself in his wisdom.

It may be argued that the proposition is not a new one and some people have made this attempt in the past. The yoga propounded by the Gita may

be cited in support of this and it may be contended that in spite of this sublime effort in the past humanity has changed but little in the core. That's not wholly true. Humanity has been changing and changing inwardly in spite of all the convulsions on the surface. Rather the quick-moving convulsions are indicative of the rapidity of the inner change.

Yet a time must come when the Divine himself has to take the lead in order to bring about a complete revolution in human outlook and bring about a radical change. The Divine in all its divinity has to come to the front, as Sri Aurobindo says, instead of working behind the veil as it has been doing eternally—which is unmistakably felt by every God-believer. But how are we to know the Divine in human manifestation, in the human leader, as He may be called? The divine personality in human garb ostensibly is the one who has dedicated himself entirely to the Divine and realised it in all his life—the Divine in all its aspects; one who has attained the vastness of Eternity and one who possesses all knowledge and wisdom and is one with whom we can identify ourselves in all our being and have the fulfilment of our individuality and totality.

Now if we feel and be convinced in our quest of God that there is such a person among us, living just now in the world, we have to give ourselves up, first inwardly and then in all our being to him, owe complete allegiance to him and allow him to do his work, by whatever means he wants in his divine wisdom, for the transformation and fulfilment of humanity and ultimately for establishing the divine kingdom on earth. Truly speaking, we have to allow him to build the divine empire. That one is not merely a superman of Nietzschean conception but the Divine Person. But confuse him not with any earthly Fuehrer or Dictator, for he wants not to enslave the individual or the race and make them follow one pattern of life or ideology, but allows the manifestation of divine infinity, variety in unity.

The sceptic would perhaps nod his head again and say: 'This is all well and good. But what about the civilization and its paraphernalia man has built?' The obvious answer of any thinking man however would be: 'We value not much this much-vaunted civilization. It's gaudy no doubt but not soothing. Frustration is written large on its brow. Rather we feel with the poet that the world is today too much with us. Is not its malaise too deep-seated? Is not its disease ineradicable? Its doom is perhaps not far off.'

A somewhat deeper reply would be that this civilization is not all bunkum, although it is palpably imperfect. Indeed we have passed the stage of calling life and world an 'empty dream'. That was a too individualistic view-point. We feel that it is after all an evolving earth and evolving civilization and in

fact it is the All Brahman who Himself is evolving. Man as he is today is the epitome of the evolution of the Intellect which is one of the vestibules of the Spirit in its manifestation. But has not the stage come when the Spirit itself should evolve in all its pristine glory and manifestly establish its domain down to the very material? Humanity in spite of all apparent indications to the contrary, seems inwardly ready to establish the Spirit as its leader consciously and allow It to found Its empire, and for itself attain 'joy and victory'.

So ultimately man, with his intellectual pride humbled and opening of heart, will have to see that it is the Spirit—the Divine who will determine the value of all human elements—its qualities, customs and institutions. Undoubtedly for the entire mankind, the representative man who is one with the Divine will give indications of these new values and forms in the light of his wider and vaster knowledge. These indications we too shall perceive by our inner light and there is no question of compulsion or formal acceptance. That's not the divine way, for what the divine wants acceptance of is the truth of things. And whatever we have to accept we would accept in the joy of the spirit. Necessarily all our egoistic and ego-altruistic ways of life will have to change and temporal values will have to be transformed into eternal ones.

The nucleus of this work of transformation has been formed and this is today the nerve-centre of the new way of life. We have to recognise it. From the heights of the being the spirit is now manifesting towards the base—from the inmost centre to the outer vestibule, the physical. In this light we should take the message given sometime back by Sri Aurobindo on physical culture. It is no trite, commonplace message but is of deeper significance. The pith of it is that if we have so long been urged to accept inner perfection as the golden means, the call has now come to turn to our body too—to make it the perfect manifesting vehicle of the spirit, i.e. spiritualise it and obliterate the fundamental difference which so long persisted in earthly life. In the same manner will be spiritualised gradually all human activities which now seem outward and a new vista will open for individual perfection as well as harmonisation of communal life.

The divine empire would thus mean recognition of the divine lead in moulding of humanity in the divine way, in which individual souls are called to participate and willingly accept divine government. In our human obscurity and arrogance let us not confuse it as an imposition like any human empire. In fact you are free to owe allegiance or take the risk of persisting in the old, ignorant way. Similarly you are free to owe allegiance to the Divine Person. He is after all no dictator or pontiff, although he stands

manifested before you. But if we accept him in our heart and soul and being we feel that it is He who is our inmost self—the Being of our being and it is His power which shapes and reshapes our outward manifestation and activities and determines their values.

PROMODE KUMAR SEN

Open the vital to Radha's influence; it will establish in you an *absolute loving consecration to the Divine.* Then there will come an *intergral opening* of your being which will hasten the manifestation of *Love the Victor.*

*

With *simple sincerity, faithfulness* and *purity open your vital being to the Divine's Love.*

*

Devoted loving consecration, faithfulness, purity and *peace in the vital*—these four are the conditions most important for conquest of the *power over the most material vital.*

*

A *mind quiet* and filled with the *sweetness of thoughts exclusively turned towards the Divine* is the gate through which there will be the constant *connection between the supramental light and the material being.*

*

Be *simply sincere* in your *obedience to the Divine*—This will take you far on the way to *transformation.*

DIVINE BECOMING

The Message of Sri Aurobindo

I

THOSE who have been fortunate enough to read *The Life Divine* will have little hesitation in ranking Sri Aurobindo as a thinker of impressive stature, and his great exposition of the life of the Spirit as one of the most important books of our time—perhaps, as one authority has maintained, the most important. The mystic does not often combine the formidable qualifications of a first-rate philosopher, psychologist and creative thinker, but in the work of Sri Aurobindo a visionary intensity is balanced by psychological acuity and the clarity of a high, subtle and penetrating intellect.

At its best the Indian mind is crowned by a synthetising vision denied to the analytic intellect of the West, and it is this power of synthesis, of dispassionate discrimination and lucid definition which gives to the genius of this Indian master of the spiritual life one of its most commanding qualities.

In *The Life Divine* Sri Aurobindo sets out, to use his own words "to discover what is the reality and significance of our existence as conscious beings in the material universe and in what direction and how far that significance once discovered leads us, to what human or divine future." It is a journey that takes us through one thousand six hundred and twenty-seven closely reasoned pages. Its object is not only to re-assess the thought of the ancient Vedic thinkers, where, we are told, "we have the widest and profoundest extant synthetic vision of spirit and man and cosmos" and of the Gita which is founded on the original Vedanta of the Upanishads, but to create upon this basis the ideal of a new ascent to a higher principle of consciousness in the life of humanity. To this new spiritual evolution—or revolution—Sri Aurobindo gives the term *gnosis*, spiritual being.

The Life Divine has fed very deeply from the teaching of the Gita, so that it is in the two volumes of *Essays on the Gita* that the fundamental principles underlying the greater work are to be found. The Gita, like the Gospels, has suffered much from being approached by the eye of prepossession. Verses have been torn out of their context to support the teaching of divergent schools and to harmonise with a Quietism and Impersonalism that have no foundation in an impartial study of the complete text. The object of the *Essays* has been to restore to the Gita the totality of its vision, not to bend it to the service of a prejudiced or partisan view, and to present its teaching

in a manner relevant to modern needs. The result is an elucidation of the text which brings out vividly the full power and beauty of the Indian conception of God, of man's nature and destiny and final beatitude of love in union with his Creator.

The Gita sets out to solve a spiritual and practical enigma; it is therefore not primarily a metaphysical treatise, though its metaphysics inspire and consolidate its teaching. The enigma is that of action. How shall a man act in the world, since "action is the greater part of life and the test and formulated power of a man's values of being," and attain to full spiritual stature? Is action incompatible with the divine life? In solving this problem the Gita takes the unpropitious example of a man faced with launching a terrible war and killing his fellow-men, and on these grounds builds its gospel of affirmation that action, inaugurated from a spiritual orientation in the Source of action, transcends spiritual quietism. To attain that orientation, to act in harmony with the Divine Will and not from the corrupted sources of the ego, is the central core of its teaching. Briefly, it is the 'Way' of an integral Yoga synthetising knowledge, will and devotion; for it is only through an absolute self-giving of heart and mind and will—of the whole being—that the soul can attain perfection. The perfected man approaches God "with no single side or portion of himself, exclusive spiritualised mind, blinding light of the heart intense but divorced from largeness, or sole aspiration of the will in works, but in all the perfectly illumined ways of his being and his becoming, his soul and his nature."

The foundation of this Yoga is the concept of universality, the knowledge of God as transcendent and immanent Reality. It is based on the acceptance of the three eternal states of the Divine Being; first as eternal, immutable self-existence, the bases and support of all existent things; secondly, as spirit mutable in nature, manifested by her as all existences; and thirdly as Transcendent Divine, who can be both of these states at once "because he is something other than and more than these two whether taken separately or together." Matter is "substance and power of spirit and could not exist if it were anything else, for nothing can exist which is not substance and power of Brahman." It is "a product of Energy, and mind and life must be regarded as superior products of the same Energy. If we admit the existence of a cosmic Spirit, the energy must be spiritual; life and mind must be independent products of a spiritual energy and themselves powers—and manifestations of spirit." Again, matter is "(divine) delight offering itself to its own consciousness as an object . . . as a formal basis of objective knowledge, action and delight of existence." This energy or force originates in the pure Existenc e of Godthrough "an inherent self-consciousness inseparable

from its being . . . throwing itself out as force of movement of consciousness which is creative of forces, forms and worlds." In this spiritual monism therefore there is no antinomy between spirit and matter. The connecting medium is "psyche or soul-power and the primary action psychological and qualitative, not physical and quantitative." It is a conception of ultimate and primary reality in harmony with the thought of some modern physicists who define matter as a derivative reality of force or consciousness. In the thought of Sri Aurobindo all existence is sustained by this unique, inherent power of consciousness, deeply involved in the inanimate and in the lower forms of life and only partially unveiled in man. It is this undeveloped power of consciousness which is responsible for our errors and failures and misconceptions. Evil and suffering spring from it for they are "the creations, positive in effect, negative in essence, of a distorting consciousness which has fallen from the total and unifying knowledge of itself into some error of division and partial experience. This is the fall of man typified in the poetic parable of the Hebrew Genesis . . . deviation from the full and pure acceptance of God and himself, or rather God in himself, into a dividing consciousness which brings with it . . . the fruit of a divided being." It is a "full and pure acceptance" constantly enjoined by Jesus on his hearers and pointed by the sense of unity inherent in the child, and the wholeness of the pure in heart.

Consciousness itself is variable in status, condition and operation. In the creation of the material world, by a plunge into matter it is veiled in the Inconscient and must evolve out of this ignorance and rediscover its fullness. At its highest point it is Supermind, the light of gnosis, the Truth-Consciousness of God, of which the Overmind is the middle term and delegate between the Ignorance. Between the darkness of the Ignorance and this "luminous Overmind corona" our human mind, or what we term our mind, "a surface mental action" not to be confused in any way with the totality of consciousness, struggles to rise from darkness into the light. Thus to Sri Aurobindo, Consciousness, in some status or another, is a principle of all existence. He calls it "the fundamental thing in existence." In the human being consciousness is both above and below mind, with a movable "stress' and increasing in integration as it ascends. It is his criticism of psycho-analysis that it greatly exaggerates the role of the subconscious, and in a letter of advice to a disciple, contained in *The Bases of Yoga,* he curtly dismisses some of the sacred tenets of western psychology: "Your practice of psycho-analysis was a mistake," he writes, "It has, for the time at least, made the work of purification more complicated, not easier. The psycho-analysis of Freud is the last thing that one should associate with

Yoga. It takes up a certain part, the darkest, the most perilous, the unhealthiest part of the nature, the lower vital subconscious layer, isolates some of its most morbid phenomena and attributes to it and them an action out of all proportion to its true role in the nature. Modern psychology is an infant science, at once rash, fumbling and crude. . . Moreover, the exaggeration of the importance of suppressed sexual complexes is a dangerous falsehood and it can have a nasty influence and tend to make the mind and vital more and not less fundamentally impure than before." And in another place he states that psycho-analysts "look from down up and explain the higher lights by the lower obscurities; but the foundation of these things is above and not below . . . you must know the whole before you can know the part and the highest before you can truly understand the lowest."

In the tiny area of consciousness we have developed we form certain largely erroneous mental perceptions in relation to our nature, and that of the universe, which serve a rough utilitarian purpose in our traffic with life, but which are impotent to solve the fundamental problems of existence, since the limitations of our consciousness continually falsify experience, and cannot through the imperfect instrumentation of mind do anything else. Nature, by the psychological action of the three *gunas*, tamas, rajas, and sattwa, subjects us to the domination of ego and desire and personal will. Hemmed in by these illusions we can have no true self-knowledge and therefore no world or God-knowledge, for reasoning can only be conclusive "if the perception of things on which it rests is both a true and a whole seeing."

This cannot always be true of mental perception even in relation to the most easily ascertainable reality of all, that of the physical world, and still less so in an order of reality which exhausts the range of mental cognition.

In this state a man may well ask how he can hope to find the uncorrupted springs of action, and to reconcile the "full active life of man with the inner life in the highest self and spirit." The Gita replies that he can do so through the union of knowledge, works, and love.

II

In spite of what marauders of the Gita's text have done to establish the pre-eminence of either works, or quietistic withdrawal from action as the one sovereign way to God, Sri Aurobindo makes it clear that the teaching of the Gita places no such exclusive emphasis on action or contemplation. Negative passivity, the renunciation of life and works, is admitted, "but only with a minor permissive sanction." It is the dryest and most

difficult way to God, the way of the "razor's edge." Against intolerant asceticism or pride of knowledge it sets its face firmly, as against a "passive relationless identity (which) excludes love and action." A diminution of works is not indispensable; it is not even advisable; it may be a dangerous example. This idea is elaborated in *The Life Divine*, where it is urged that the passive and dynamic aspects, being part of the Divine Being, must also represent the perfect human pattern. "It is possible, indeed, to exist only in status, with the force of being self-gathered and immobile in the self; but, even so, to be in dynamis as well as in status is the integrality of existence." Not cessation from action, but renunciation of desire is the guiding principle of the Gita. The Integral Way lies in the perfect synthesis of knowledge, works and love. The pattern of its following is in the manner in which Arjuna accepts the truth "with the adoration of his heart, the submission of his will and the understanding of his intelligence."

This knowledge is not mental cognisance, but evolution into a higher spiritual consciousness, a knowledge of heart and spirit. Salvation, which is dependent on perfection, cannot come without self-knowledge and only ascent into a higher principle of consciousness can bring that self-knowledge and God-knowledge.[1]

Before outliningthe steps of the Gita's sadhana,or system of self-discipline, which will lead to this perfection, it would be well to indicate briefly the psychological analysis of the individual on which it is based. In each being is seated the Supreme Self, Paramatman, the Purushottama, Supreme Lord and Brahman, the divine witness of our actions; what we should call Spirit. Within is also the individual Purusha, or soul, which falls under the domination of the ego, defined as "a sense which makes him (man) identify himself with the creation that Nature has made of him, with the varying mind and life and body she has constructed." This action of Nature, or Prakriti, subjects the soul to the three modes or Gunas, which are her qualities, sattwa, rajas, and tamas.[2]

To withdraw the soul from outward concentration in the ego to inward union with God is the way of liberation. This turning inward to seek God —"seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness (his immortal dharma or law)"—is the first condition on which the Gita's sadhana

[1] "Ancient Indian thought meant by knowledge a consciousness which possesses the highest Truth in a direct perception and in self-experience." *The Life Divine*, Vol. II, part II, p. 595.

[2] Psychologically these can be defined roughly as contemplative mental type (sattwic), active type (rajasic) and inert, ignorant type (tamasic). In nature Sri Aurobindo defines them, as equilibrium, kinesis, inertia.

is built. It is necessary therefore to note very closely the exact distinctions of Self, Soul and Ego-personality as they are used here. It is the extinction of ego (what we sometimes loosely define as self) with its divided consciousness and avid desires which the mysticism of the Gita teaches, and the withdrawal of the soul into the primordial purity and unity of God, whose kingdom is within. "God is a Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." That is, in the supreme principle of their own being and in the bliss, purity and light of the Divine Truth-Consciousness.

The first step then, is the development of the sattwic qualities of goodness, humility, chastity, compassion, and the attainment of inner quietness and impersonality. The fretful disequilibrium of the ego with its ambitious and ephemeral desires, its subjective constructions of pain and pleasure, liking and disliking, together with sin—the revolt of the rajasic propensities against the self-mastery of the spirit—must all be overcome. But ethical action to the Gita is only a means of self-purification; man can never attain to the highest by virtue alone, though by its practice he can develop a first capacity for attainment. When the Yogin has achieved this equality and perfect inner immobility, he must next offer his action to God as a sacrifice. The idea of himself as the author of the action will still persist, but the fruits will be offered to God; the Yogin will no longer seize them personally as his own; failure and success, praise or blame will not disturb his impersonal calm. All will be offered up to the Lord of the Sacrifice. Thirdly he will act, but surrender all notion of himself as the doer, acting in the consciousness that it is the energy-force (or power of manifestation) of God which is the sole doer. He will act in the knowledge of this force as God's supreme power, and in a renunciation, a surrender, of all actions to their Source, seeing himself only as a channel for their effectuation in the world. All sense of action as being individual will cease. United then with God in knowledge and in works, in mind and will, he will act, not from egoistic choice, but from the Truth-Consciousness of the Divine and Eternal Being which will possess him. "I live, yet not I, but it is Christ who liveth in me."

There is yet a further step the disciple must take. He must know God as "the one who eternally becomes the Many, the Many who in their apparent division are still eternally one." He must know that there is no dichotomy of being itself, but a multiplicity of status of the one Being "in all his relations of difference." This integral knowledge comes only by love: "a highest bhakti . . . that is calm and deep and luminous with widest knowledge." This profound love of the soul, "its heart's knowledge,"

is the core of the integral beatitude, "when the heart's fathomless vision completes the mind's absolute experience." When man has once seen this vision of his true nature and of God as the Supreme Being, Creator of the universe and all beings, "his whole life aspiration becomes a surpassing love and fathomless adoration of the Divine." Made one with God "in being, consciousness and divine bliss . . . the liberated spirit can know infinitely, love illimitably, act unfalteringly in the authentic power of a highest immortality and a perfect freedom." Thus, says Krishna, the divine Teacher, this supreme vision "cannot be won by Veda or austerities or gifts or sacrifice; it can be seen, known, entered into only by that bhakti which regards, adores and loves Me alone in all things."

Love is the crown of works and the crown of knowledge. Perfect love is the key to perfect knowledge. Its supreme seal on life is reflected by man living in the world for God.

The teaching of the Gita, as it is presented by Sri Aurobindo in these *Essays*, points then to the perfection of the being through an offering of the whole existence in which heart, mind and will are fully integrated. It says in effect: "Be ye also perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect," and makes the attainment of that perfection possible through the depth, sanity and wide synthesis of the spiritual way which it advocates. It is the loss of the petty ego and the putting on of the true spiritual nature, the nature of Christ and of Buddha, that we are bidden to achieve. And in this the Elect—or in Christian terminology "the chosen"—are *all* those, even the most hopeless and sinful, who can make that initial act of self-surrender. "If," says Krishna, "even a man of very evil conduct turns to Me with a sole and entire love . . . (he will) obtain eternal peace." It is the redemptive mercy of the Gospel.

On the subject of love the psychological scrutiny of the Gita is however very piercing. There are many subtle corruptions of the egoistic nature —even of the sattwic, the highest ethical nature—which must be watched over. The disciple must not fall into the self-centredness which seeks an egoistic seclusion from "the trouble of participation in the world-action." Neither must he fall into any error of partial love for God. And partial love means for the Gita that love which turns to God for succour or deliverance in suffering, which seeks him for his gifts, or for aid and protection; or which, still ignorant, turns to him for knowledge and illumination. So long as the disciple is limited to these forms "there may persist even in their highest and noblest Godward turn a working of the three gunas." In short, God must be loved and adored for himself. Here the object of the Gita's constant emphasis on knowledge is made clear. Though love

brings the supreme knowledge (truth-consciousness) love without knowledge is a snare. This may seem a paradox. It means simply that the highest bhakti cannot come unless it is based upon a real discernment of the nature of God, man and the cosmos. A man cannot act in truth unless the ground of his action is a perfect knowledge. The fruit of the spiritual life "is according to the knowledge, the faith and the work and cannot exceed their limitations."

In this process the Gita stresses the need for each individual to find and follow the unique inner law—swadharma—of his own being, which in turn possesses its own law of progress. Even if it is defective it is better that the well-performed rule of another's nature. This inward law is the being's natural way of evolution, and to follow any other is dangerous. In the forward adventure of faith a man's guiding light will be "his will to believe, to live what he thinks or sees to be the truth of himself and of existence" for this rises from a divine formulation in him which he must develop. St. Paul expressed this as obtaining "mercy of the Lord to be faithful"—inner guidance to act and think the truth; not obedience to a compulsive standard of belief thrust upon him by church or state, but freedom to hear and follow the intimate direction of God in his own heart.

III

This then, in a necessarily compressed and curtailed summary, is the metaphysical basis and the spiritual teaching which pervades the thought of Sri Aurobindo and is expanded and creatively applied to further reaches of man's development in *The Life Divine*. It is a monism which recognises the distinction between Being and becoming but does not force it into an opposition. God is immanent in his creation; but he is also Supreme Self-Existence and Transcendent Divine. He is not equated either with his creation or the production of creative energy and activity, or with his Supreme Self-Existence, the basis of creation, since in his third status he exceeds them both. The distinction therefore between immanence and transcendence is not held all together, as in theism by the doctrine of personal identity between God and man, though the conception of God as Supreme Person, together with the retention of individual survival, is one of the most interesting aspects of Sri Aurobindo's thought, and not in accordance with what (perhaps too credulously) we have come to understand as the teaching of Brahmanism on these points.

With the "fanatics of the Absolute" the "intransigent absolutists of the spirit who. . .yearn after...the dissolution of all that we are in life and mind,"

he is fundamentally at variance. Though this way is admitted by the Gita it is not "the full and natural movement of the spiritualised human nature." "A featureless extinction may be a vigorous demand of the mind's logic of self-annulment," he writes, "it is not the last word of the supreme mystery." To him the miracle of God as "a Supreme Person and apparent vast Impersonal that are one," is echoed in "the inner person, the spiritual individual, that persistent miracle of our being." Existence is meaningless without an Existent. God is the essence and source of all (pure) personality, therefore he is an Infinite Person. In the Gita the expression of that personal term is made manifest at the close, where Krishna abjures Arjuna to take complete refuge in him. "The words of this passage express the most complete, intimate and living relation possible between God and man . . . The phrases used ... give the most intense prominence possible and an utmost importance to the personal truth and presence of the Godhead. It is no abstract Absolute of the philosopher, no indifferent impersonal Presence or ineffable Silence intolerant of all relations to whom this complete surrender of all our works can be made. . .It is a Master of our works, a Friend and Lover of our soul, an intimate Spirit of our life." Again, 'a deep and large love and adoration. . .ask for a relation and an intimate personal closeness." The mystery of this Supreme Person is the secret of love and devotion, for though personality is an attribute of the Divine it is not the ego-personality of the lower nature. We must not confuse Person with our experience of Ego.

In supporting the persistence of the spiritual being against dissolution in the featureless Absolute, Sri Aurobindo examines at some length the position of the Buddhist Nihilists, the Illusionists and the question of Maya. The many sides of this bristling problem are clearly put forward and turned in the light of a keen analysis. He maintains that a faulty interpretation of the Upanishads gave rise to the uncompromising Illusionist system, which holds that the universe is a figment of consciousness imposed on the mind: that escape is only to be found in the dissolution of a self that is also illusory, and a return to the Unmanifest. But God "cannot create non-existent things in an illusory universe." If he is Real what proceeds from him cannot be unreal. If he has no need of manifestation he has no need of illusion. Again, if all is a devastating illusion, how can we be sure that experience of the Supreme Self is not also an illusion? In such a system all is a vast illusion swallowing nothing but illusion: "God and ourselves and the universe become myths of Maya." There is, however, an "element of unreality in the Real," which is not a fact of being but a formation of consciousness. This formation of consciousness compels the mind

to place its own invalid mental structures upon the universe, which produces an appearance of illusion; this power of illusion is heightened when consciousness passes too suddenly or violently to Reality without understanding the transitional stages. To obtain a true and unifying knowledge, it is necessary to discover the link between cosmic and transcendent Reality.

To this Indian mystic, to quote Keyserling, "joy is the characteristic emotion of the completely spiritualised life." It is the sharing of the Divine Ananda which created the world for its delight, for the sheer bliss of creation. The essence and whole constituent of true bhakti is a delight in God. The perfected heart is possessed by "the pure and divine passion of the presence of the Beloved," bringing "an insistent joy of labour for God in yourself and for God in all beings." This vision of God does not divorce from life; it urges man to an intimate engagement with life, living in the world for God and the consummation of his divine purpose, sharing all life as part of his own, loving God in all creatures, his neighbour's Self as his own Self, seeing nothing but the presence of God everywhere, meeting his delight in all things and in every moment. It is thus a mysticism very far from the spirituality of Tertullian, Bernard of Clairvaux, John of the Cross, the Franciscan Spirituals and A Kempis with his "let us then despise and neglect the world." In its teaching perfection, the exceeding of ourselves, is "the cross surmounted by an invisible crown." The joy of Easter Day is the abiding reality, and though crucifixion is its price, the crucifixion of the ego, suffering can never be clung to as an end in itself.

For Sri Aurobindo, though the highest experience of God is ineffable, God is not inaccessible: he does not make our search for him difficult. The meaning of existence is "self-implied in the self-nature of things and discoverable here": it is not—and this is where he differs radically from theism —dependent on a revelation of God's will. But in the search for the Highest, as the Gita warns, the disciple must expect "nights of long exile from the Light." Those who may have been misled by the idea that the Dark Night of the soul is unknown to Hindu mystics should study Sri Aurobindo's comments to disciples on Dryness and Suffering in Yoga, contained in a recently published volume of his *Letters*. The immolation of the ego and the re-orientation to a new centre of consciousness must inevitably be attended by suffering, which stems from the involution of the soul in ignorance and its imperfect response to reality.

The Divine Life then, "is a life of essential, spontaneous and inherent unity." The aim of men developing in the world, "a supreme recovery of unity with God and with all in God." "To become is our life's significance." Becoming is putting on the divine nature. It is the ascent to a

new status of consciousness, for "greater consciousness means greater life. Man, the mental being, has an imperfect life because mind is not the first and highest power of consciousness of the Being: even if mind were perfected there would still be something yet to be realised, not yet manifested. . . .What is involved and emergent is not a Mind, but a Spirit, and mind is not a native dynamism of consciousness of the Spirit: supermind, the light of gnosis, is its native dynamism." Again, "gnosis is the effective principle of the Spirit, a highest dynamis of the spiritual existence. The gnostic individual would be the consummation of the spiritual man": he would reach "to the last and supreme state of the epiphany of the Creation."

It is with the development of the gnostic being and the building up of a gnostic community, incarnating the harmony, perfect relation and relatedness, the spontaneous and intuitive realisation of Truth in being and in action which is the culmination of *The Life Divine*. Although to Sri Aurobindo Christianity and Buddhism are "tears on the fire of the world's suffering," his criticism of Christians is that they propose only to produce the sattwic religious ego. He maintains that "Christianity has no higher spiritual or psychological knowledge behind it and ignores the foundations of human character and the source of the difficulty—the duality of mind, life and body. Unless there is a descent of a new Power of Consciousness... which will provide a new foundation and a lifting of the centre of consciousness above the mind, the Kingdom on earth can only be an ideal, not a fact realised in the general earth-consciousness." (*Letters*). It is a criticism that plainly needs qualifying. Admittedly Christianity has no metaphysic. That may be its strength. What is a more serious concern is that axiomatic injunctions to spiritual behaviour, however indisputable, do not solve the problems of attainment. This can only rest on a profound and accurate psychological and spiritual discernment, and few Western masters of the spiritual life have yet approached that synthesis of psychological insight with spiritual knowledge on which the writer of the Gita founded his sadhana.

It has been stated once or twice recently in this country that only a radical change of *consciousness* can now avert a second calamity overtaking the West. Exactly what that radical change of consciousness means, or how it is to be effected, is not explained. It is therefore time perhaps that we should listen, and try and adapt into the conditions of our own spiritual heritage, the teaching of a mystic who knows what that new consciousness entails, and who has effected it within himself.

Maladjustment in the individual and between the individual and the world, therefore between nation and nation, comes from an imperfect knowledge of the *laws of being*, which in its turn results in the blind and

desperate struggle of the individual to break out of the prison of his own discord. Lacking the true means of a unifying spiritual knowledge, harmony, instead of being achieved through ascent to a higher principle of being, is a matter of rough and imperfect compromise between ego and ego, and within the ego itself. Like the bitter antinomy of State and Individual it could not exist were we in possession of "that knowledge (which) belongs to a deeper principle of our being to which oneness and integrality are native. It is only by finding that in ourselves that we can solve the problem of our existence and with it the problem of the true way of individual and communal living."

Sri Aurobindo believes, not only that it is the only real solution of our dilemmas, but the inevitable ascent to which human evolution is now being impelled. His Integral Yoga is therefore truly a Yoga of Transformation, designed to effectuate that "descent of a new Power of Consciousness." Its subtle psychology—subtle, because unlike the empirical psychology of the West, Indian metaphysical psychology is founded on the most exacting introspective analysis and observation—is the outcome of long personal study, and the study of others. It is not merely "another Yoga." It aims at an integralising of the whole individual, physical, vital, mental and spiritual, and not at the development of one specific side as in Hatha, Raja, Karma, Jnana, Bhakti or the Tantric systems of Yoga. These systems have been used for centuries in India, and though they have developed the individual they are inadequate to the instrumentation of this particular aim.

Psychological insight, invaluable as it may be in a teacher, is only one of Sri Aurobindo's qualifications for speaking with authority on the life of the spirit. The most important is, of course, the mystical experience which has set its clear seal on his life, his work, and his thought. The quality of that mysticism can only be gauged by reading his books. It would perhaps be a mistake to try and identify him closely with any western mystic, since like all great men his thought has its own unique and inimitable quality; but the temptation to liken him to the Angelic Doctor is in some ways irresistible. Like St. Thomas he is *fiamma benedetta*, a flame of heavenly wisdom; but unlike St. Thomas, he bestrides an intellectual treasury even richer than that comprised by Judaism and ancient Rome and Greece, for he adds to all these the spiritual wisdom of India. The intellect at work in *The Life Divine* expresses itself naturally in English (for he was brought up in this country): it is familiar with English literature and with western scientific thought, and can move easily from a discussion of the psychology of St. Augustine to a criticism of Sir James Jeans, and from disposing of the

anti-mystical nonsense of Mr. Leonard Woolf, to answering questions put to him on some statements of McTaggart. It is therefore a mind doubly enriched by the wealth of two hemispheres. Because he is a poet as well as a mystic, Sri Aurobindo's vision is both creative and prophetic. I believe that as a spiritual philosopher he has no equal in the world today.

MORWENNA DONNELLY

(From *The Wind and the Rain*, A Quarterly, London, 1948.)

COSMIC RHYTHMS

NOW cosmic rhythms are a laughter in my pulse,
For the heart stands back immense and knows no aim,
Cool core of a body of tortuous paths to power.
My blood is the singing altar of that Rose
Rooted in the rest beyond all universe.
Seraphs are crossing my mind that is wonder-wide
Smiling to see even here an Eye like the Sun,
And where they halt, my love's touch breaks out wings.
All is perfection, thought and word and tune,
Because the ineffable shines through each interspace.

AMALKIRAN

LIGHTS ON THE FUNDAMENTALS*

(Continued from the last issue)

10. Preceded by Will this is created; God is not indifferent. There does not arise the question, even a whit, of the fault of unfulfilled desire.[1]

It has been stated that the universal movement is not guideless and left to the care of a care-free blind force, but that there is a conscious principle, the guiding Intelligence which is present in each and all of the created existence. Now the question arises if it is an omnipresent Intelligence that guides, it may be guide of a sort even by its passive presence and itself may not be actively disposed to the universal movement; and the creative principle in the Godhead may work out and formulate the universal existence through forms of mechanical laws, while the Godhead may remain indifferent to the world-product. Here, the answer is given that there is a Will in the Godhead using the creative principle and that this Will carries with it the Intelligence and therefore there is no question of indifference on the part of God. This is what is stated in the first half of the couplet. It must be noted here that God's will is not restricted to this or other world-movement, nor the Intelligence confined to the function of directing the Will and the Will-force towards the world-formation and world-guidance. What is meant here is this: in certain lines of latter Vedantic thought stress is laid on the indifferent aspect of Brahman in regard to Creation. There is no gainsaying that the equality or sameness of Brahman in all creation is in a practical sense the same as indifference of the Impersonal Reality. In that view, one can say that creation is an indifferent expression, natural and effortless, of the Force, Shakti, inherent in the Consciousness, Chit, that is Brahman. But the standpoint taken here, and the truth upon which emphasis is laid is that it is not the Brahman which is passive and equal or indifferent that is meant here as the Cause, but Brahman which is also the Godhead, the Person as the Cause of creation that is willed and held in His infinite being. Therefore there is the Will with its executive force

* तत्त्वप्रभा

[1] इच्छापूर्वमिदं सृष्टं नेश्वरस्य तटस्थता ।
अनाप्तकामदोषस्य न गन्धोऽपि प्रसज्यते ॥१०॥

that fashions the forms of creation; consequently the willing Godhead cannot be said to maintain indifference in regard to the universal movement.

Then, it may be asked why there should be a desire or will to create at all. Now we are apt to forget that what is desire in us is a perversion and corrupted counterpart of the Will in the Creative Godhead and imagine that God too is afflicted with wants and to fulfil them he desires and creates. Here the latter half of the verse says that there is no fault, the fault of want, the question of fulfilling any desire on the part of God. It is childish to reason that God need not desire or will to produce because he is full and there is no want in him, and desire after all arises from want while God, the Full, cannot be thought of as having wants causing desires. This is an irrational imposing of the kind of human wants and desires on the Will-force inherent in the Consciousness of the Lord. Thus the question of the fault of unfulfilled desire as the cause of Creation does not arise. How? The next verse says:

11. Can He create the world if he is not full Himself, even though He desires to? Delight, Ananda, being rich and full, this effusion (this creation) takes place.[1]

It is the Will of the creative Godhead that releases the universe of world-movement that we call creation; and this is no more than an expression or manifestation of the Delight of Being. We may conceive of this effusion as an outflow of the supremely full and rich Bliss of Existence that is immense. It is no desire or want that creates, it is the Will that does. If we pause and consider the course of human activities, the fact will be obvious that it is force that works and effectuates and not desire though it may be an incentive for action in all activities of the ego-ridden individual. Desire without force and substance is impotent and can have no place in any creation which is an output of energy even in human affairs. This is what the text drives at. The creator is full of substantial Delight on which the Will-force plays bringing out quite naturally something of that Delight, Ananda, in the form of what we call creation. The radical significance of the Sanskrit word *Ananda* itself is at once richness and fullness, *samriddhi* and all-embracing joy. This truth has been perceived by the seers of old who state in unequivocal terms that the creation issues from Fullness.

[1] अपूर्णः स्रष्टुकामोऽपि जगत्स्रष्टुं कथं प्रभुः।
आनन्दस्य समृद्धत्वात्पूर्णत्वादस्य सर्जनम् ॥११॥

12. Because this universal movement, a fragment, is taken out full from the Full (Being), (therefore) in the fragment, the Bliss is intensely full, the Supreme Lord.*

The couplet recalls the statement of an Upanishadic truth which makes a summary disposal of the argument of certain schools of metaphysicians. It is an old question, not a living challenge. Still it is but proper to make mention of it here and present in unmistakable terms our position in regard to the infinitude of Being, the Immensity from which the world issues and comes to be, as an emanation or expression of the ultimate Reality. It used to be asked—it may still be asked—how can the Ultimate truth or Absolute Being or Non-being conceived rightly to be infinite have finites in it to be released? If the Infinite is made up of finites, then these finites or parts make up a whole which means that the whole also is finite. And the Infinite being Absolute, how can it include finites in it? If they are not included in it, how can there be finites outside of the Absolute, the Infinite, this latter being all-inclusive? It is the same question in another form of the Absolute and the Relative. The answer is simple and clear. The difficulty arises from the assumption that the Infinite is opposed to the finite or beyond the finite and therefore treated as something negative, not positive like the finite of our common experience. But the sages of the Upanishads see and think differently. This is clear from their statements that He is full of all qualities, *sarva gandha, sarva rasa* etc. Again there is another class of passages in the Upanishads such as 'That is not gross, nor subtle' *asthula, ananu* etc. It is clear from these parallel statements,—not contradictory as certain schools contend—that both are equally valid and the negative description is meant to drive home the truth that the Infinite is beyond the finite, the Absolute beyond the Relative, and that the positive statement that He is all etc. purports to inculcate the truth that it is the same One that is He and It,—He is the positive all, the All; He is It also as the Ineffable beyond all qualities and relatives and not as opposed to them, but as source and support of them. Therefore if to the superficial reasoning of metaphysical 'logic for the sake of logic' Infinite cannot exclude or include the finite, to the truth-vision of the ancient seers corroborated by latter sages up to our own times, the same One is Brahman, the It, and is God, the He. That One is at once the Impersonal, the Personal and the Beyond, even as it is at once the Sat, the Chit, the Ananda as we shall see.

* यस्माज्जगदिदं पूर्णादंशः पूर्णमुदञ्च्यते ।
तस्मादंशेऽपि सम्पूर्ण आनन्दः परमेश्वरः ॥१२॥

If so, we can put it that the Infinite is not devoid and a negation of the finite, but that it is something positive and so immense as to hold in itself infinite number of finites and allows their release, wills their manifesation in and out of itself.

The question then does not arise that the finites being released from the Infinite go out of it separated, or diminish it. For the finite has no existence at all without the Infinite. After all, what is the finite? Is it not but a limitation in and of the unlimited in the space-time formula of existence? Is it not essentially one with the Infinite, while it is distinct and separate in the formal existence presented to the senses, i.e. the sense-mind, or even the thinking intelligence based upon it? We can call it a quantitative existence against a background that is at once all quantity and beyond all quantity. The same may be said of the quality of the finite with a background that is all quality and beyond it. The sages of the Upanishads put it trenchantly "That is full and this is full, out of the Full the Full is lifted up. Fullness being taken from Fullness, Fullness alone remains." And this means clearly that the finite holds the Infinite in itself and every part and whole are essentially one. Therefore the Finite, the creation in this sense is taken from the Full and even though it is but a part, a fragment, even there the Full is present, the Supreme Lord, as the Delight of Existence.

13. Whence, by dint of Tapas (self-contained Conscious Force) a part assumes the shape of the world; there the Supreme Lord is full, and takes delight along with the Eternal Power.*

It has been stated in the opening couplets that it is the Consciousness as Force, Chit-Shakti, that works out the World-existence. Here it is to be noted that the same Force in the self-contained poise is called Tapas in the early Vedantic texts. It conserves and incubates and turns out the Will-Force for the execution and shaping of the creation that is loosened forth from the Infinite Being. It is necessary here to avoid a likely misconception that all creation is an output of the Force and in a sense the Force itself because of its character as a movement and that the Supreme Lord is unconcerned and aloof leaving the creative work to the Shakti alone. Therefore it is stated that He takes delight in the creation along with the Eternal Power, the Nitya Shakti. Now a confusion may result from the use of certain terms in the statements made about creation as caused by the Tapas, by the Consciousness-Force, by the Will-Force or as an effect and effusion of Ananda, a manifestation of the Delight in

* कोऽप्यंशो जगदाकारस्तपसा जायते यतः ।
तत्र पूर्णः परः शक्त्या रमते नित्ययेश्वरः ॥१३॥

Existence etc. Therefore the couplets that follow attempt to give an idea of the senses in which these terms are used such as Sat, Chit, Ananda, Prakriti, Maya, Tapas and the rest, for they represent certain aspects of the Sole and Ultimate Truth called variously with due significance.

14. The Inexhaustible, the Full, the One alone, known as Sat-Chit-Ananda is the Lord of the world-creation, the Cause material as well as efficient.[1]

The One is viewed here in the various aspects that pertain to Creation. First, it is stated that He is One, *ekah*, inexhaustible, *avyayah*, because infinite; second, it is the Full, as already explained; next, He is always spoken of as Existence-consciousness-delight, Sat-Chit-Ananda. We have spoken of these three terms separately, but here for the first time the triple formula is applied to the Sole Reality. The connotation of each term must be clearly understood especially in regard to its being the Cause. And Cause is essential and material as clay for a pot, to use the stock example of Sanskritists; Cause is also efficient, as the potter in the case of a pot. We shall see what aspect of the triple formula of Sat-Chit-Ananda constitutes the material Cause and what the efficient.

15. The substance of the worlds is the Material Cause, Prakriti; it is the Body of Brahman called Akasha, etherial extension; it is intense consciousness-bliss, Aditi in the language of the Vedas.[2]

It is a fundamental truth and solid bold statement of the Vedantic seers that all creation including the Physical Existence is formed out of Brahman, the Substance, and therefore this latter is the radical Nature, Prakriti, of all world-creation. Even though what we call Matter may appear as devoid of consciousness, still it is Brahman denoted by the triple formula of Sat-Chit-Ananda. Prakriti is generally translated as Nature, but to be precise we have to make a distinction between the primordial and the executive; for the former is the substantial part of Nature, while the latter denotes its play caused by something else, some other element, by another aspect which is the dynamic principle to which we shall presently refer in the verses that follow. It is necessary to remember that Prakriti is generally used or understood in the latter systems as Nature or Force of Nature or Nature at work. But the term is used here to denote the primordial

[1] एक एवाऽव्ययः पूर्णः सच्चिदानन्दलक्षणः ।
उपादानं निमित्तं च विसृष्टेर्जगतः स्मृतः ॥१४॥

[2] प्रकृतिः स्यादुपादानं जगतां ब्रह्मणो वपुः ।
आकाशश्चिद्घनानन्दोऽप्यदितिर्वेदभाषया ॥१५॥

substance which in its manifest form includes Matter also. But essentially, it is the substance pure, the untranslatable Akasha, the etherial Extension, whose nature is Bliss, Akasha Ananda. This is the body of Brahman, *akasha-shariram Brahma*, in the words of the Upanishad. This Indivisible, the Infinite field we may say, is called Aditi, the Matrix of all Creation. Thus in this couplet Aditi, Akasha, the primordial Prakriti, the body of Brahman, all refer to one and the same aspect, the Delight, Ananda of the triply mentioned Sole Brahman, Sat-Chit-Ananda. Now that we have seen how the Material Cause, *Upadana Karana*, is Brahman as Ananda, we shall consider the character of the efficient Cause. And this is the text:

16. Consciousness-Force, indicated by the term Tapas is the cause efficient for the rise of the world. The one Atman who *exists* is said to be threefold by the wise.[1]

We have already spoken of Tapas as the Chit-Shakti, Consciousness as the Force that implies the Will to create. And this is the efficient cause, *nimitta karana*. The Force acts upon the substance, the material which is Brahman, the Akasha Ananda. It shall not be supposed that Brahman, the Ananda is separate from Brahman the Chit-Shakti. To drive home this truth the text says that the Atman is One but triple in aspect; for He exists, therefore he *is* conscious and powerful and full of Bliss. Or it may be put in terms of the Impersonal It, that whatever is, exists, *sat*. Consciousness *exists*, Delight *exists*, and pure existence challenges analysis. must not be supposed that the three make up the One Brahman, but Brahman the One presents a threefold aspect of the Self-existent Atman, Conscious and Blissful. The comprehension of the One in the triple formula is a necessity for the human mind. It is correct thought and is justified by the corresponding lines of practical approach of the seeker, for they yield the results appropriate to the path leading to that aspect of the Goal. More is not warranted here and will be a digression. The next verse clarifies the distinction between Prakriti and Maya.

17. Aditi (the Infinite) is called Prakriti; Tapas is called Maya; because indivisible She is (called) Aditi; and Maya is so called because she measures the Immesurable.[2]

[1] चितिशक्तिस्तपोवाच्या निमित्तं जगदुद्भवे ।
सन्नेवमेक एवात्मा त्रिरूपः प्रोच्यते बुधैः ॥१६॥

[2] अदितिः प्रकृतिः प्रोक्ता तपो मायेति कीर्तिता ।
अदितिः सा त्वखण्डत्वान्मानान्मायेति गीयते ॥१७॥

The significance of the term Aditi and of Prakriti has been already stated. Here what is stated anew is that Tapas is the same as Maya. We have stated that the field is the Akasha, Ananda, substance on which the Tapas force acts and effectuates; hence it is the efficient Cause. The same Tapas is Maya in this sense of the term. Maya is indeed illusion in the later Vedanta. It is a Shakti or Power in the Tantrik systems. Certainly Maya is a power of the Consciousness which in its working, displays cunning, and illusion is a result under certain conditions of its play. But Maya in the supreme consciousness is a Power, Tapas-shakti, with the Will-force and high cunning to divide the Indivisible, to finitise the Infinite, to measure out the Immeasurable. Hence, it is stated that if Aditi is so called because it is indivisible, Maya is so called because it measures the Immeasurable. In the case of both the terms the root-significance is brought out and to be noted.

18. The one (former) is the nature or substance of what exists, the Truth, the other the activity. The transcendent and supreme One himself, sustains the creation by these two.[1]

The above-mentioned two are the Prakriti, the substance that is Akasha Ananda, and Chit-shakti, Tapas, the conscious Will-force that dynamises the creative substance. By means of these two aspects of Himself, the supreme Lord, source and support of All, sustains the Creation that is the world-manifestation.

19. That Power by which the Supreme Person measures out himself, the Immeasurable, is according to some the Power of Maya; for us it is the Force of Tapas.[2]

The substance of this couplet has been already explained in the preceding verses and further elucidation here is not necessary. But the point to be noted here is this. The One is generally the Brahman, the Impersonal It, the *Sat* existence, the One is also She, as the Shakti, Consciousness-Force; but in regard to creation that One is He, the supreme Person who measures out his measureless Being by this Shakti, the Maya already described.

20. The Lord Eternal is thus threefold, sends forth from the splendour of Tapas the Cosmic Eggs. And in his own portions that were

[1] एका स्वरूपं सत्यस्यापरा व्यापार उच्यते ।
उभाभ्यां सर्जनं धत्ते स्वयमेको परात्परः ॥१८॥

[2] शक्त्या यया मिमीतेऽयममेयं स्वं परः पुमान् ।
माया सा कीर्त्यते कैश्चिदस्माभिस्तप इष्यते ॥१९॥

previously released and are born, He manifests the One Self as the Many.*

Bhagawan in the text is rendered Lord; but the Sanskrit word connotes something more than being the Master. It suggests the endless qualities that are natural to him. He is Ananta (literally) endless, which means he is boundless, inexhaustible, Eternal. He is Sat-Chit-Ananda, therefore mentioned here as threefold which is the term that intimately pertains to him. He lets loose the worlds by the Force of Tapas. This has been explained. The one thing to be noted here is that it is the heat of incubation with an innate splendour that radiates the creative force and hatches the world-embryos, Brahmanda. Ajanda means literally the Brahma's eggs from which the universe springs. And there are many universes. It is translated here as the Cosmic Eggs. The latter half of the stanza is important in that it briefly but in assured terms mentions the meaning of Manifestation. For it says, the Supreme Lord manifests the Sole Self as many selves. And where are they so manifested? In his own portions that were previously released and thrown as seeds in the creative movement that has produced the world-systems. Here ends the first section of 20 couplets dealing in general with the question of Creation as conceived in this scheme of Teaching. The full import of this verse will become clear in the sections that follow and that is, indeed, the central theme of this treatise.

(To Continue)

T. V. KAPALI SASTRY

* एवं त्रिरूपो भगवाननन्तस्तपःप्रभावाद्विसृजत्यजाण्डान् ।
स्वांशेषु जातेषु विसृष्टपूर्वेष्वात्मानमेकं बहुधा व्यनक्ति ॥२०॥

I

THE FOUNDATIONS OF NATIONALITY*

IN the latest issue of his weekly Mr. N.N. Ghose has penned an article on the prospects of Nationality in India—which he thinks to be very bad indeed—and in trying to support his thesis by examples from history he has perpetrated astonishing blunders, of a gross and elementary character. The unification of Italian republics into a nation, he says, was not so much the effect as the cause of Italian independence. We leave for the moment the truth of the statement which is contrary to the facts of history; but we would like to know what on earth our universal critic means by his Italian republics? There were republics in mediaeval Italy, but we did not know that Naples and Sicily were republics under King Bomba, or Rome under the Popes, or Tuscany under the Grand Duke, or Lombardy under the Austrians, or Sardinia and Piedmont under the descendents of Victor Amadeus. Then again Mr. Ghose has "observed" that the different States of Greece developed a National unity as soon as they had a common enemy in the Persian. Really? We had always thought that the one outstanding fact of Greek history was the utter inability of these states to develop national unity at all, the sentiment of Panhellenism never having a look-in against the separatist spirit of the city-states. And then he tells us that the provinces and states of ancient Italy (whatever that may mean) also readily united into a great national state in the presence of a foreign enemy. Yet those foolish historians tell us that Italy was united not at all willingly but by the Roman sword and the Carthaginian invasion simply tested the solidity of the Roman structure; it certainly did not create it.

But in spite of his historical blunders he has succeeded in giving expression to a very common error which troubles many patriotic people and unnerves their faith and weakens the quality of their patriotism. "Let it be distinctly remembered and never forgotten that the essential conditions of a nationality are unity of language, unity of religion and life, unity of race." And because there is diversity of race, religion and language in India he thinks that there is no possibility of creating a nationality in this country. This is a very common stumbling-block, but is there any reality

* Reprinted from the *Bande Mataram*, August 18, 1907.

in it? Rather we find that every nationality has been formed not because of, but in spite of, diversity of race or religion or language, and not unoften in spite of the co-existence of all these diversities. The *Indian Nation* has itself admitted that the English nation has been built out of various races, but he has not stated the full complexity of the British nation. He has not observed that to this day the races which came later into the British nationality keep their distinct individuality even now and that one of them clings to its language tenaciously. He has carefully omitted the striking example of Switzerland where distinct racial strains speaking three different languages coalesced into and persisted as one nation without sacrificing its diversities. In France three different languages are spoken, in America the candidates for White House address the nation in fourteen languages, Austria was a congeries of races and languages, the divisions in Russia have been in the past hardly less acute. That unity in race, religion or language is indispensable to nationality is an idea which will not bear examination. Such elements of unity are very helpful to the growth of a nationality, but they are not essential and will not even of themselves assure its growth.

If these are not essential elements of nationality, what, it may be asked, are the essential elements? We answer that there are certain essential conditions, geographical unity, a common past, a powerful common interest impelling towards unity and certain favourable political conditions which enable the impulse to realise itself in an organised government expressing the nationality and perpetuating its single and united existence. This may be provided by a part of the nation, a race or community, uniting the others under its leadership or domination, or by a united resistance to a common pressure from outside or within. A common enthusiasm coalescing with a common interest is the most powerful fosterer of nationality. We believe that the necessary elements are present in India, we believe that the time has come and that by a common resistance to a common pressure in the shape of the boycott, inspired by a common enthusiasm and ideal, that united nationality for which the whole history of India has been a preparation, will be speedily and mightily accomplished.

II

THE THREE UNITIES OF SANKARITOLA*

Mr. N. N. Ghose's position—and we notice it only because it is the position of better men than he—is contained in the following luminous sentence: "The bookish politician is not able to cite a single instance where a nation was made by boycott or under any conditions other than the unities we have more than once referred to." Here there are two propositions one, that boycott never made a nation, the other that in every case of the building up of a nationality there have been present as indispensable conditions and the only causes of the growth of nationality Mr. Ghose's three precious unities,—viz., a single language, a single race, a single religion. A more shallow, ignorant and unfounded brace of assertions it would be difficult to imagine. We pointed out in the first article in which we condescended to notice Mr. Ghose's flounderings, several instances of nations which have been welded into unity and maintained their unity without possessing a single one of these indispensable "unities". As for unity of race there is not a single one of the European nations which is not a compound of several races except, possibly, the Scandinavian peoples. In England up to the present day the Celtic races preserve their separateness and distinct individuality; in Austria there are a superfluity of different races and languages; Russia is a congeries of peoples; Italy was built up out of various races and even after the accomplishment of national unity the Gallo-Lombard of the North and the Latins, Oscans, Umbrians, Tuscans of the Centre find it difficult to understand and live with the Graeco-Italians of the South; in Germany the Prussian, the Slav, the Pole, and the South German are of different race-types and temperaments; in Spain the Iberian, the Goth and the Moor have mingled their blood; in France there are the Breton, still a distinct race, the Provencal and the Frank as well as the Celts of the centre and the Aquitanian, each with noticeable marks of its separate origin: in Switzerland there are three races speaking three different languages. Does Mr. N. N. Ghose want any more instances? We can give him plenty if he does. If he had even the most insignificant knowledge of common facts, he would not have needed our assistance to enlighten him on the subject. Every one knows, except the Sankaritola sage, that

* Reprinted from the *Bande Mataram*, September 1, 1907.

race and nationality are two totally different things which have no necessary relation to each other, since one depends upon common descent while the other is a geographical and political unity. One might just as well say that different chemical substances cannot combine into a single substance as that different races cannot combine into a single nation. There is no such irreconcilable divergence between the races in India as to make their union an impossibility. If we turn to unity of language we find a respectable number of nations which do not speak a single language. Three languages are spoken in Switzerland, the same number in France, while Welsh holds its own in Great Britain. Unity of language, therefore, is not necessary to nationality, only the recognition of one prevalent language as the State language is required. If America, needing to be addressed in fourteen languages by her would-be President is a nation, what reason is there that the people of India should not federate into a single political unity? As for the religious difficulty, it is an old bogey. We do not deny the difficulty created by the divisions between the Mahomedans and Hindus, but it is idle to say that the difficulty is insuperable. If the spirit of nationalism conquered the much fiercer intolerance of the religious struggles in Europe after the reformation, it is not irrational to hope as much for India in the twentieth century. We have not seen in Mr. N. N. Ghose's polemics a single argument or favourable instance for his pretentious theory of the three unities of nationalism. We do not deny that it would be a great help to us if we had a single language or professed a single religion. But we do deny that these "unities" still less the unity of race are indispensable. There is no warrant for such a view in history or in reason.

REVIEW*

"From the words of the poet men take what meanings please them; yet their last meaning points to Thee."

(TAGORE: GITANJALI)

THE milk-maid of Gokul has set out to sell her wares; but her heart and mind are absorbed and centred round her Lord Sri Krishna. In the streets she walks down with the milk-pot on her head and calls out "Ye, buy of me Govinda, Damodara, Madhava". When Bilwamangal describes this scene it is difficult to pass it by as mere poetic imagination, devout, if not sensuous. Yet there are many who would have it so. To them Krishna is a product of the Mythus in which Indian imagination abounds. Or, to some it is all an allegorical presentation. That is the utmost that in their superior wisdom they would concede. There are others who passionately believe that not only Sri Krishna was an incarnation of God, but that every word of what is written about that Event is literally true. In between there are a few to whom it does not matter what was actual history. The very Name and Epos of Sri Krishna have a living appeal to their heart and that is enough to give meaning to their own life. To this circle belongs the author of this tiny book, Mrs. Mani Sahukar.

Krishna Sangeet is not even a legendary biography of Sri Krishna in a full sense though there are brief and striking references to Puranic accounts of his life; nor it is a study of his teachings and philosophy, though they are lightly touched upon here and there. It is less ambitious, but more intimate. It is, as she puts it, a record of her 'spontaneous response to all this rich store of beauty and spirituality which the *Bhagawata* offers.' And it is a vibrant record.

Before proceeding with the book proper, we would like to make an observation or two regarding the Central Figure around whom the whole Purana (Bhagawata) revolves. Many, and eminent men among them, deny any factual basis for Krishna as a historical personage. Some condescend to allow a possible existence to Krishna holding that there may have been a certain princeling—'a Kshatriya chieftain'—during those times, but Krishna as we have come to know him and revere him is entirely a product of the fertile

**Krishna Sangeet* By Mani Sahukar. Published by Thacker & Co. Ltd., Bombay. Pp. 75, Price Rs. 3/-

imagination of the Poet. But the traducers of Krishna are not confined to the sceptics alone. They derive an unexpected support from deists and theists who say that Krishna is a symbol of great Truth and should be worshipped as such. Now these symbols and *pratikas* are meant for the less competent weaklings, *mandādhikārins*, and cease to have validity when they advance, become strong and fully competent, *uttamādhikārins*. For them the utility of the symbols is over; for they are just symbols and aids for emotional exercises or to some extent for purposes of concentration on the idea of the Supreme or as the aesthetic representation of the Ideal of Beauty, or a vivid figure of the supreme Bliss, Ananda.

We can accept this view with reserve and qualification. For it is impossible that a non-existent person, created by the poet's mind or even a symbol or a concept based indeed on a philosophical Truth could have exercised such a tremendous influence on, and given such a definite orientation to, the life of the race in the way Sri Krishna has done. It is a gratuitous assumption to deny the historicity of Krishna. The very vitality of his teachings, the fervour evoked and surcharged in the outpourings of his Bhaktas and the living imprints on humanity, of Sri Krishna as an Avatar bespeaks the divine afflatus that surged up in his appearance on earth. As Sri Aurobindo has observed, he marks a definite stage in the upward evolution of man and has opened up a new possibility for him. He was an Avatar. The conception of Avatarhood is of course peculiar to the Indian genius. As the author points out: "All other religions have talked of God sending prophets or saints to redeem the world, but the Hindu scriptures have gone beyond this in exclaiming that God himself comes down to earth . . . these special incarnations assumed by the Supreme Being for helping on the process of evolution are termed 'Avatars'" (p.3).

After a brief analysis of the purpose and value of mythology—which she describes as 'the poetry of religion', the author proceeds to give a short account of the birth and life of Sri Krishna. Discussing the colour of Sri Krishna's complexion she observes it was blue because, blue betokens love and also because the sky and the sea are blue. We think the author is nearer the truth when she remarks "The blue has somehow assumed in India a peculiarly esoteric significance." But why is it so? It is a fact recorded in scriptural texts, corroborated by living experience—an experience in which the spiritual vision turns upon the occult truths of Nature and finds that Blue is the colour of the first grounds of the Higher Consciousness. It is not that the physical body of Krishna was blue-complexioned, it is the light of his subtle form, let us call it aura, that was blue, and is blue for ever.

There is another point to which we would like to draw the author's attention. Sri Krishna did not close his earthly career at the age of thirty-six as is mis-stated (p. 36). He died in the 36th year from the termination of the Battle of Kurukshetra. For these are the words of Gandhari: "In the 36th year from now you will meet your end." [1] Nor did he meet his end against his will as a result of the curse. It is not that he and his men died helpless because he was so cursed. He willingly accepted the curse and *let* Gandhari's wish be fulfilled. This is not our interpretation. Any one who goes through the relevant passages of the Mahabharata will be convinced of this fact. "He, the Lord of the world did not *wish* to alter Destiny." [2] Why? Destiny itself is a previous decree of his Will. That is why he says to Gandhari: "*I know this*; let it be so. None else but myself could destroy the Vrishnis, they canot be destroyed by others, men or Devas or Danavas." [3]

In the two succeeding chapters, the author discusses the profound influence Sri Krishna's life has had on Indian Art, Music and Dance. She has interesting things to say on music, gestures in music etc. (p. 56). While dealing with the Rasa Lila dance of Sri Krishna and the Gopis, we are afraid the author tends to overstress the symbolical aspect of it (p. 50). In this connection it is pertinent to recall what Sri Aurobindo has said on the matter:

> "The story of Brindavan...it seems to me that it is related as something that actually occured or occurs somewhere. The Gopis are to them (Puranas) realities and not symbols. It was for them at the best an occult truth and occult and symbolic are not the same thing; the symbol may be only a fanciful invention, but the occult is a reality which is actual somewhere, behind the material scene as it were and can have its truth for the terrestrial life and its influence upon it may even embody itself there. The *lila* of the Gopis seems to be conceived as some thing which is always going on in a divine Gokul and which projected itself in an earthly Brindavan and can always be realised and its meaning made

[1] उपस्थिते वर्षे षटत्रिंशे.... निधनं समवाप्स्यसि
(M. B. Striparva, 25: 44, 45)

[2] कृतान्तमन्यथा नैच्छत् कर्तुं स जगतः प्रभुः
(M. B. Mausala Parva, 1: 24, 25)

[3] जानेऽहं एनदप्येवं....। संहर्ता वृष्णिचक्रस्य नान्यो मद्विद्यते शुभे। अवध्यास्ते नरैरन्यैरपि वा देवदानवैः॥
(M. B. Striparva, 25: 48, 49)

actual in soul. It is to be presumed that the writers of the Puranas took it as having been actually projected on earth in life of the incarnate Krishna and it has been so accepted by the religious mind of India."

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M. P.

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